First in Fiction

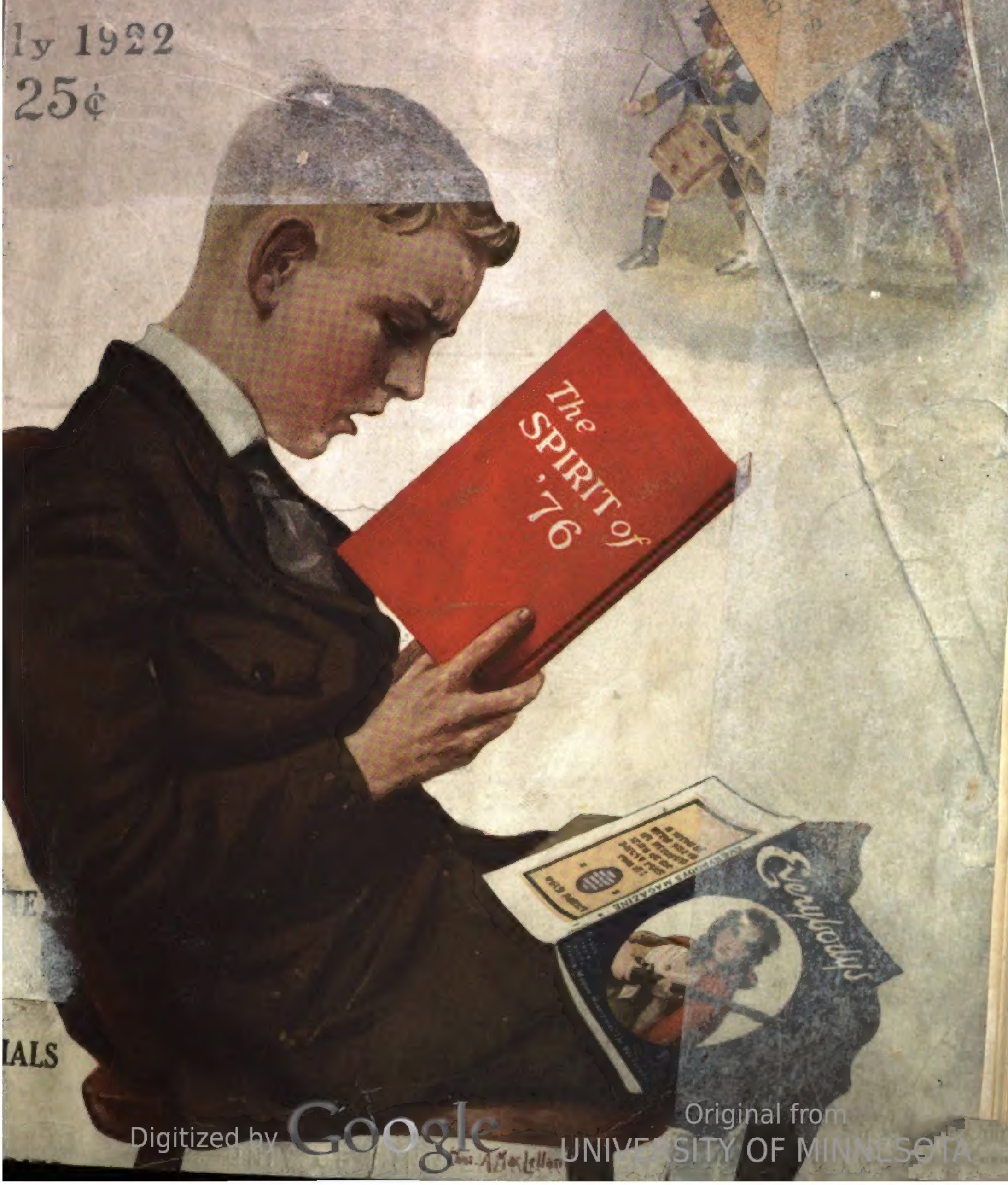
ROOM

JUN 18 1922
UNIVERSITY OF [illegible]

Everybody's
MAGAZINE

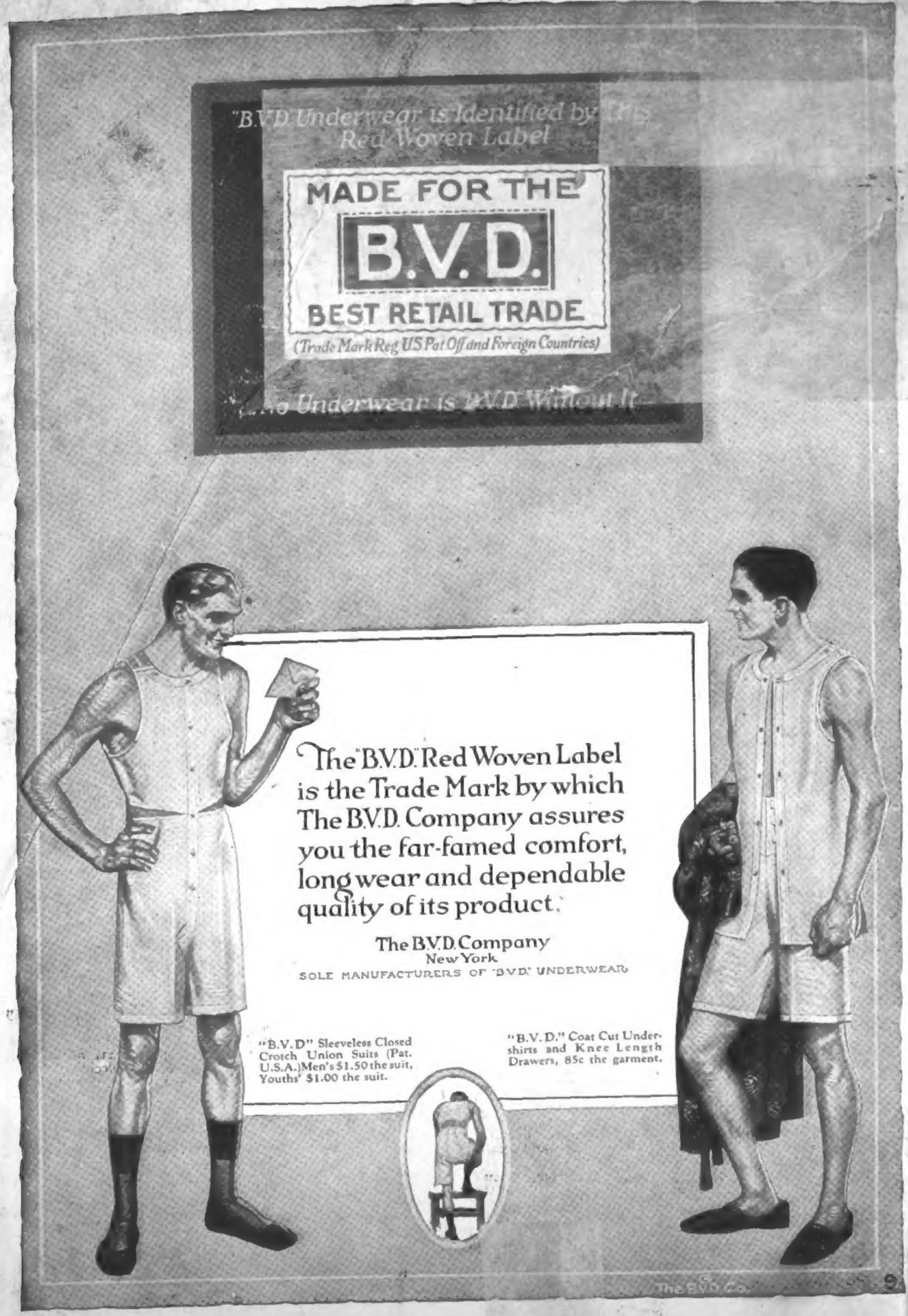
[illegible]
[illegible]
of Univ Farm

ly 1922
25¢


The SPIRIT of '76
EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE
Everybody's

TE

IALS



"B.V.D." Underwear is Identified by This Red Woven Label

MADE FOR THE
B.V.D.
BEST RETAIL TRADE
(Trade Mark Reg U.S. Pat Off and Foreign Countries)

No Underwear is "B.V.D." Without It

The "B.V.D." Red Woven Label is the Trade Mark by which The B.V.D. Company assures you the far-famed comfort, long wear and dependable quality of its product.

The B.V.D. Company
New York
SOLE MANUFACTURERS OF "B.V.D." UNDERWEAR

"B.V.D." Sleeveless Closed Crotch Union Suits (Pat. U.S.A.) Men's $1.50 the suit, Youths' $1.00 the suit.

"B.V.D." Coat Cut Undershirts and Knee Length Drawers, 85c the garment.

In every man's life there is one Big Moment when he makes the decision that robs him of success—or leads on to fortune.

Your One Chance to Earn The Biggest Money of Your Life!

HAVE you ever considered why our richest men come from our poorest boys? Isn't it a strange thing that it is almost invariably a young fellow who starts life without a cent in the world, without education, without influential friends—in short, without one single solitary advantage—who accumulates millions of dollars? Isn't it a miracle that inside of a comparatively few years a man can rise from abject poverty to fabulous wealth?

The Secret That Makes Millionaires

Astonishing, certainly—but more important, it is wonderfully inspiring. For it means that no man need be held down by circumstances. Once he knows the "millionaire's secret," he can put it into operation regardless of all obstacles that seem to block his path. He suddenly finds that everything he touches turns to gold—money flows in upon him—fortune showers him with its favors. Everything he wants seems to come to him just as surely and easily as day comes after night.

What is this amazing secret that can work such wonders? It is just this: **The thing behind all big achievement is Opportunity.**

To every man there comes one BIG Opportunity—the golden hance of his life. And in the moment he decides for or against hat opportunity—whether he will seize it or let it pass—he ecides the whole future course of his life.

Choose Between Low Pay and Magnificent Earnings

This very minute **you** may be face to face with **your** BIG pportunity—your **one** chance to earn the biggest money of ur life! Right now your decision may mean the difference tween a life of plodding, routine work at low pay and a career inspiring success and magnificent earnings.

For now you are offered the very opportunity that has made her men rich, that has brought them more money than they er dreamed of earning.

It is the same opportunity that lifted Warren Hartle of icago out of a job in the railway mail service where in ten ars he had never gotten beyond $1,600 a year, and landed him a $10,000 a year job. It jumped Charles Berry of Winterest, wa, from $60 a month as a farm-hand, to $1,000 a month. It ught to C. W. Campbell of Greensburg, Pa., a clerk on the road, a position that paid him $1,562 in thirty days.

These men and hundreds more have found their **Big Opportunity** in the wonderful field of Salesmanship. They are all Master Salesmen now. They are earning the biggest money of their lives—more than they ever thought possible—they are engaged in the most fascinating work in the world—they are independent, come and go as they please—they meet big men—every minute of the day is filled with thrilling variety.

Your Big Opportunity may be here too, in the wonder field of Salesmanship. Perhaps you say you have never even thought of becoming a Salesman. But before you decide one way or the other, examine the facts for yourself. See what Salesmanship offers you—why it is the best paid of all vocations—why there is no limit to what you may earn. Read the amazing proof that no matter what you are doing now, you can quickly become a Master Salesman in your spare time at home—read how the National Salesmen's Training Association in its nationwide search for men to fill the great need of Salesmen, has devised a wonderful system that reveals to you every Secret of Selling without interfering in the least with your present work. See how this famous organization helps you to a good position in the line of Selling you are best fitted for.

Facts That Will Amaze You—Sent FREE

Mail the coupon below. This will not cost you a penny—it places you under no obligation. It simply means that you will receive, entirely FREE, a wonderful, illustrated Book "Master Salesmanship" and Proof that you can be a Master Salesman. You will receive, also, the personal stories of men throughout the country who today are enjoying magnificent success and earning five, ten and fifteen times as much money as ever before.

Send NOW—this minute may be the turning point in your life. Address, National Salesmen's Training Association, Dept. 74-H, Chicago, Ill.

National Salesmen's Training Association,
Dept. 74-H, Chicago, Ill.

I simply want to see the facts. Send me FREE your Book "Master Salesmanship" and Proof that I can become a Master Salesman. Also tell how you can help me to a position and send list of lines with openings for Salesmen.

Name ....

Address ....

City .... State ....

Age .... Occupation ....

EVERYBODY'S
ly 1922

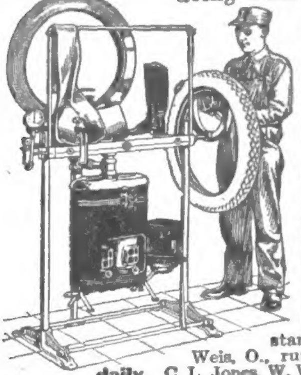
Published monthly by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City. Yearly subscription $2.50 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Aug. 16, 1899, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Entered as second-class matter at the Post-Office Department, Ottawa, Canada.

Volume XLVII
Number 1

JUN 21 30 U OF M BINDERY

Make $1,000 Easy!
From Evening Work

Skidmore of Ohio started last Nov. Has made **$3000** to date! Greatest proposition of century. Grasp it quick! Make **$30** to **$50** a week doing work at home evenings.



Do Not Quit Your Job

Make big money on side. Turn spare hours into cash with my **new home outfit.** Vulcanize automobile tires. Mend tubes. Repair gum boots and rubber goods of all kinds. Do **thriving neighborhood business.** Many men started economically. L. D. Weis, O., running better than **$15 daily.** C. L. Jones, W. Va., averaging more than **$47 day** during past six weeks, and so on.

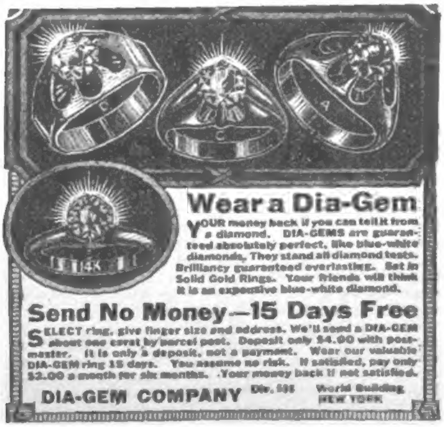
Little Money Starts You!

Write me. Get my help. Begin **now.** Season **just opening.** Tire repair **work** galore **everywhere.** I furnish **everything,** including machine, tools, clamps, materials and directions. No experience needed. Everything **plain and easy.** All instructions **learned in one evening.** Can't go wrong. Marvelous proposition. Wm. Howe, Mo., says: "Biggest little machine I ever saw." Steve Marchand, Texas, writes: "Am having wonderful results with your machine." Others are making **extra money**—you can too!

Mail Postal To Me, Tonight!

Get full details. It's a proposition you can handle. Place machine anywhere—garage, shed, basement. Has **wonderful capacity.** Work is **easy, pleasant** and **fascinating.** Starts you in big paying business. Puts you on road to independence. Send quick for full information. Address me personally.
M. Haywood, Pres.

Haywood Tire & Equipment Co.
617 Capitol Ave. Indianapolis, Ind.



Wear a Dia-Gem

YOUR money back if you can tell it from a diamond. DIA-GEMS are guaranteed absolutely perfect, like blue-white diamonds. They stand all diamond tests. Brilliancy guaranteed everlasting. Set in Solid Gold Rings. Your friends will think it is an expensive blue-white diamond.

Send No Money—15 Days Free

SELECT ring, give finger size and address. We'll send a DIA-GEM about one carat by parcel post. Deposit only $4.00 with postmaster. It is only a deposit, not a payment. Wear our valuable DIA-GEM ring 15 days. You assume no risk. If satisfied, pay only $2.00 a month for six months. Your money back if not satisfied.

DIA-GEM COMPANY Div. [illegible] World Building NEW YORK

Dr. Esenwein

SHORT-STORY WRITING

A course of forty lessons in the history, form, structure and writing of the Short-Story, taught by Dr. J. Berg Esenwein, for years Editor of Lippincott's. *150-p. catalog free.* Please address

The Home Correspondence School
Dept. 347 Springfield, Mass.

An Easy Way to Remove Dandruff

If you want plenty of thick, beautiful, glossy, silky hair, do by all means get rid of dandruff, for it will starve your hair and ruin it if you don't.

The best way to get rid of dandruff is to dissolve it. To do this, just apply a little Liquid Arvon at night before retiring; use enough to moisten the scalp and rub it in gently with the finger tips.

By morning, most, if not all, of your dandruff will be gone, and three or four more applications should completely remove every sign and trace of it.

You will find, too, that all itching of the scalp will stop, and your hair will look and feel a hundred times better. You can get Liquid Arvon at any drug store. A four-ounce bottle is usually all that is needed.

The R. L. Watkins Co., Cleveland, Ohio.

GOOD LUCK
彩 好

GENUINE!

Cheap imitations of our original and genuine Chinese Good Luck Ring flood the market. Worthless, poorly made imitations of brass and nickel are offered at ridiculously low prices. The person who wishes to be surrounded with the *true superstition of the Orient,* and at the same time possess a ring of *genuine beauty,* will avoid all others and order our *original* and *genuine* Chinese Good Luck Ring. *Al Jolson,* Doris Kenyon, Vivian Martin, as well as others in theatrical, professional and business circles declare that our *original* ring has brought them *great good luck!* Protect yourself against fraud and insure your future good fortune (foretold by the Ancients) by ordering from *us* this *genuine* ring (Stamped inside with the ≋).

Sterling Silver, $1.50 Solid Gold (10-k) $9.00.

Pay on arrival if you wish. C. O. D. 10 cents extra

THE ZANZIBAR CO., Dept. 125, 353 Fifth Avenue
New York City

You Can Be Independent

YOU can have all those extra things you would like to have. Through our spare-time, money-making plan, you can earn from $5 to $25 every week in addition to your present income. No experience is necessary. We furnish all supplies and instructions absolutely free, and gladly cooperate with you at all times. No obligation. Full particulars sent immediately upon request. Mail this ad to-day!

MANAGER, STAFF AGENCIES DIVISION
Box 855, Butterick Bldg., New York, N. Y.

Learn Advertising

Earn $40 to $150 Weekly

You learn easily and quickly by mail in spare time at home. We assist you to earn $20 to $40 weekly while learning. Highest paid profession, tremendous demand, positions waiting. Write for handsome book of particulars. Applied Arts Institute, Dept. 305, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

POEMS WANTED

for publication. Cash paid for those available. Send one short poem today for free examination.

IDYL PUB. CO., 189 N. Clark Street, Suite 221, CHICAGO

The DuBarry Set
THREE DUPLEX
DUPLEX
DURHAM DUPLEX RAZOR CO. N.Y.
PAT'D U.S.A. MAY 28.1907
THREE BLADES

Now

every man can shave HIS OWN WAY with the famous Durham-Duplex Blades

MEN OF AMERICA, shake hands with our new DuBarry Model, the "razor sensation of 1922." This new safety has been added to the Durham-Duplex Razor family so that every man may shave **his own way** with the famous Durham-Duplex blades—the same wonderful blades that have brought shaving joy to millions of users of the regular Durham-Duplex Razor.

$1 Durham-Duplex Razor (either Model), in handsome white celluloid case. One Dollar Complete. Other sets up to $12.

Additional Blades 50c for a package of 5

DURHAM-DUPLEX

The Razor for He-Men

USE THIS COUPON If your Dealer can't supply you with the DuBarry Set

DURHAM-DUPLEX RAZOR CO., 190 Baldwin Ave., Jersey City, N. J.—Enclosed is One Dollar, for which you are to send me one Durham-Duplex "DuBarry Set."

My Dealer's Name is ....

Street .... City ....

Sign Name here ....

Street .... City ....

DURHAM-DUPLEX RAZOR CO.

Jersey City, New Jersey

Factories: Jersey City, U. S. A.
Paris, France Sheffield, Eng. Toronto, Can.

Sales Representatives in All Countries

Easy to Play
Easy to Pay

BUESCHER

True-Tone
Saxophone

Saxophone Book Free
Tells when to use Saxophone — singly, in sextettes or in regular band; how to transpose cello parts in orchestra and many other things you would like to know.

Easiest of all wind instruments to play and one of the most beautiful. You can learn the scale in an hour's practice and play popular music in a few weeks. You can take your place in a band within 90 days, if you so desire. Unrivalled for home entertainment, church, lodge or school. In big demand for orchestra dance music. The portrait above is of Donald Clark, Soloist with the famous Paul Whiteman's Orchestra.

Free Trial You may order any Buescher Instrument without paying one cent in advance, and try it six days in your own home, without obligation. If perfectly satisfied, pay for it on easy payments to suit your convenience. Mention the instrument interested in and a complete catalog will be mailed free.

(34)

BUESCHER BAND INSTRUMENT CO.
Makers of Everything in Band and Orchestra Instruments
1634 BUESCHER BLOCK ELKHART, INDIANA

DIAMONDS
½ CARAT $99.00

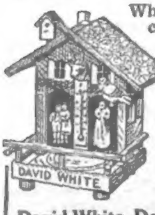
Former all-cash price $165.00. New low prices: 40% discount. ¼ carat, $49.00; ¾ carat, $147.00; one carat, $195.00. If satisfied, pay 20% down; balance in 10 monthly payments.

10 MONTHS TO PAY

Genuine sparkling blue-white diamonds now sold direct to you by DIAMOND IMPORTERS on credit. 18 Kt. solid white gold ring included free. We guarantee to satisfy you or to return your money. *30 days free trial!* Order direct from advt. or write for 128-page bargain catalog, sent free.

$1 000 000 and 43 years experience back our guarantee

B. GUTTER & SONS 172 NASSAU STREET
Div. 444 NEW YORK



TELL TOMORROW'S Weather

White's Weather Prophet forecasts the weather 8 to 24 hours in advance. Not a toy but a scientifically constructed instrument working automatically. Handsome, reliable and everlasting.

An Ideal Present
Made doubly interesting by the little figures of Hansel and Gretel and the Witch who come in and out to tell you what the weather will be. Size 6 1-2 x 7 1-2; fully guaranteed. Postpaid to any address in U. S. or Canada on receipt of **$1.25**

Agents Wanted
David White, Dept. P, 419 E. Water St., Milwaukee, Wis.

WYOMING SEMINARY

A co-educational school strong in character building. Experienced teachers in every department. College preparation, Business, Music, Art, Oratory and Home Economics. Gymnasium and Athletic field. 78th year. Endowed. Catalog. Address

L. L. SPRAGUE, D. D., L. H. D., Pres.
Kingston, Pa.

CHICKS Broilers, Leghorns, Rocks and Reds, 7 cts. and up. Safe delivery guaranteed. Circular free.
Box No. 15
W. A. LAUVER, - McAlisterville, Pa.

Commun-ities

Serve Your Community

in the pleasant and dignified rôle of Butterick subscription representative. Look after the hundreds of new and renewal subscriptions that are continually coming to us direct from your locality.

DURING your spare time — hours you would ordinarily waste—you can easily earn those extra dollars you need so much by letting your friends and neighbors know that you are representing *Everybody's Magazine*, Adventure, The Delineator and The Designer.

ONE of our representatives, Mr. Ralph Young, of Ohio, makes $125 a month just by giving two hours daily to his magazine subscription business. You can do the same.

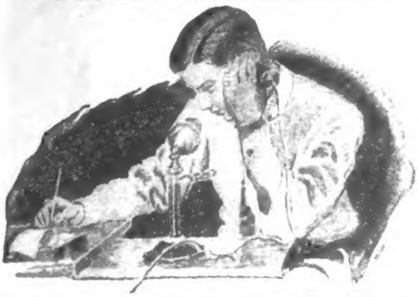
NO EXPERIENCE is necessary. We will send you immediately on request all necessary information regarding our practical, money-making plan, absolutely without expense or obligation to you. Simply fill in the coupon below and mail it *to-day*.

Manager, Staff Agencies Division
Box 856, Butterick Bldg., New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir—Please send me, without obligation, full particulars concerning your spare-time, money-making plan.

Name . . . .
Street . . . .
City . . . . *State* . . . .

CARNES
Artificial Arms



Puts The Empty Sleeve To Work

Here is the most perfect substitute for the natural arm ever invented. Not a makeshift but a real substitute—with an elbow that bends, a wrist that turns and fingers that flex. All these movements instantly at the will of the wearer. Natural in appearance, inconspicuous and graceful—armless people eat, dress, drive automobiles, write and perform difficult mechanical work perfectly.

Illustrated Book Sent Free

Hundreds of wearers all over the world have proven the Carnes Artificial Arm. Write today for our free book which shows actual pictures of what wearers can do and gives a complete explanation of this wonderful invention. Address the

CARNES ARTIFICIAL LIMB COMPANY
302 Carnes Bldg., 904 East 12th St., Kansas City, Mo.

Stop Using a Truss

Reduced Fac-Simile Gold Medal.

Reduced
Fac-Simile

Grand Prix.

STUART'S PLAPAO-PADS are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made **self-adhesive** purposely to hold the distended muscles securely in place. **No straps, buckles or spring attached**—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone. Thousands have successfully treated themselves at home without hindrance from work—most obstinate cases conquered. Soft as velvet—**easy to apply—inexpensive.** Awarded Gold Medal and Grand Prix. Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no further use for trusses. We prove it by sending Trial of Plapao absolutely **FREE**

Write name on Coupon and send **TODAY**

PLAPAO CO. 633 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Name ....
Address..
Return mail will bring Free Trial Plapao..........................

Comfort Baby's Skin With Cuticura Soap And Fragrant Talcum

For sample Cuticura Talcum, a fascinating fragrance, Address Cuticura Laboratories, Dept. D, Malden, Mass.

REE AMBITIOUS WRITERS, send today for FREE copy of America's leading Magazine for writers of Photoplays, Stories, Poems. Instructive, helpful.

RITER'S DIGEST, - 710 Butler Bldg., Cincinnati

"Blake is the Man!"

"I told Hartley he was a 'comer'—and this confirms my judgment! Listen to this letter:—

> Dear Sir:
>
> You will no doubt be glad to know that James H. Blake, one of your employees of whose excellent work as a student we have been advising you each month, has completed his course and has been granted a diploma.
>
> *International Correspondence Schools*

"That settles the manager question. The man who cares enough about his future to invest some of his spare time in *training* is the kind we want in this firm's responsible positions.

"That $5,000 salary will mean a lot to Blake and his family. I'll send for him now! It's a pleasure to promote a man who *deserves* it."

There is a job ahead of *you* that some man is going to be picked for. And your boss can't take chances. He is going to choose a *trained* man. Why don't you put yourself in line for that promotion?

One hour a day spent with the I. C. S. in your own home will bring you bigger money, more comforts, more pleasures, all that success means. Don't let another single priceless hour of spare-time go to waste! Without cost or obligation of any kind, let us prove that we can help *you*. Just mark and mail this coupon.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 2682, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please send me full information about the subject *before* which I have marked an X in the list below:

BUSINESS TRAINING DEPARTMENT

☐ Business Management
☐ Industrial Management
☐ Personnel Organization
☐ Traffic Management
☐ Business Law
☐ Banking and Banking Law
☐ Accountancy (including C.P.A.)
☐ Nicholson Cost Accounting
☐ Bookkeeping
☐ Private Secretary
☐ Business Spanish ☐ French
☐ Salesmanship
☐ Advertising
☐ Better Letters
☐ Foreign Trade
☐ Stenography and Typing
☐ Business English
☐ Civil Service
☐ Railway Mail Clerk
☐ Common School Subjects
☐ High School Subjects
☐ Illustrating ☐ Cartooning

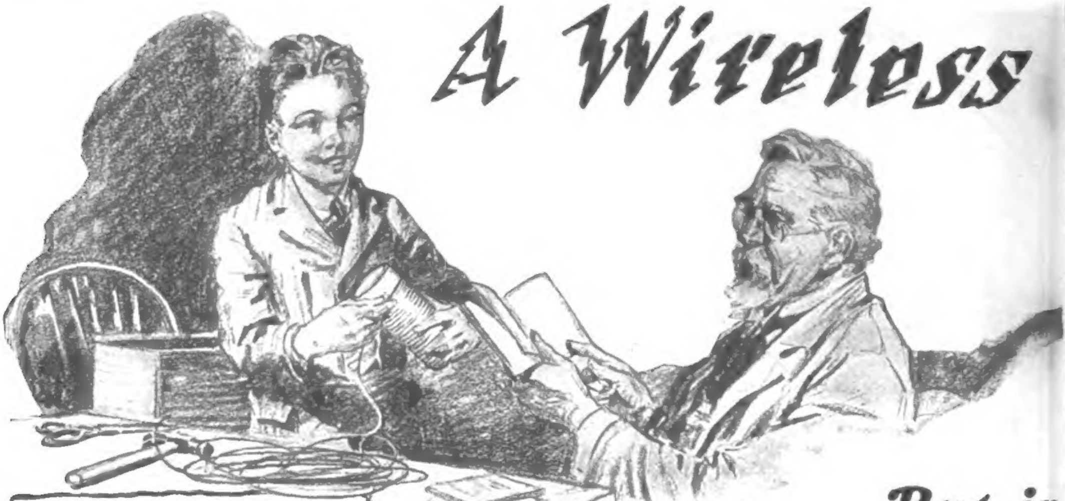
TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEPARTMENT

☐ Electrical Engineering
☐ Electric Lighting
☐ Mechanical Engineer
☐ Mechanical Draftsman
☐ Machine Shop Practice
☐ Railroad Positions
☐ Gas Engine Operating
☐ Civil Engineer
☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ Mine Foreman or Engineer
☐ Steam Engineering
☐ Wireless ☐ Airplane Engines
☐ Architect
☐ Contractor and Builder
☐ Architectural Draftsman
☐ Concrete Builder
☐ Structural Engineer
☐ Plumbing and Heating
☐ Chemistry
☐ Pharmacy
☐ Automobile Work
☐ Navigation
☐ Agriculture and Poultry
☐ Mathematics

Name..
Street Address..
City.................................State...............................
Occupation...

Persons residing in Canada should send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada.

A Wireless



Put in Your Own Radio-Phone

Do you want to enjoy the wonders of radio at home at a small cost—without trouble?

You can, thanks to the remarkable course which has just been completed by seven noted Professors and Radio Engineers, and which we now offer to you. No matter where you may live—in mountain cabin, in city apartment or country farmhouse, every man, woman and child may now enjoy the marvelous entertainments, the music, the instruction and the news items that are daily being sent out by wireless.

"The Easy Course In Home Radio"

Edited and Approved by

Maj. Gen. Squier, Chief of Signal Corps, U. S. A.

You don't need to buy an expensive outfit. This simple, complete, amazingly easy course will show you not only how to operate any set you may buy, but *how to build your own*—a good one, too, the equal, if you care to spend a little time and money, of the best $300 set.

In seven easy lessons you are given all the information you need. You don't have to be a carpenter, or a mechanic, or even a "natural-born tinkerer." The instructions are so simple that if you can hold a hammer in your right hand and a nail in your left, you'll be able to build your own wireless outfit!

These lessons are for everyone—for those who already know something of radio, and for those who know nothing. The amateur will find in them the answers to all those problems that have troubled him, written by electrical geniuses. The beginner will get from them, in plain A B C language, just what to do, step by step, and how best to do it. In fact, the method is so delightfully easy that building the apparatus is going to be one of the best bits of fun you ever had. The only thing you'll like better is using it afterward!

(Electrical Stores, Bookstores, etc., where Course can be put on sale, Please write.)

What the Jones Family Heard in One Week

MONDAY

President Harding addressing the Boy Scouts.
De Wolf Hopper, songs and stories.
Bedtime Songs and Stories for the Little Folks.

TUESDAY

Act from Traviata.
Marguerite Wilkinson reading her poems.
Latest News.

WEDNESDAY

Concert by Zips Royal Five.
Health Talk.
Fashion Lecture.

THURSDAY

Mandolin and Guitar Concert.
Talk by a Famous English Author.

FRIDAY

Complete performance of one of New York's most popular musical comedies.
Talk by Gov. Edwards of New Jersey.
Regular News Service

SATURDAY

Full Report on World Series
Concert by Melba.
Dance music by Meadowbrook Syncopaters.

SUNDAY

Address by prominent minister.
Recital by Male Quartet.
Bedtime Songs and Stories for the Little Folks.

These are only a few of the features which have been sent out. Other and more wonderful programs are to follow. Send the coupon today. Get your set ready and start "listening in."

Never Lonely Any More

(From article in Collier's)

"I remember the time," writes F. J. Caveney from a mining camp in the Temagami forest reserve in upper Ontario, Canada, to the Newark, New Jersey, radiophone broadcasting station, "when to be out here was to be out of the world—not a soul to hear or see for months on end. But the long nights are long no longer. Pittsburgh and Newark are right here in the shack shortly after sundown. You come in so plain that the dog used to bark at you even though I had the head phones clamped tight on my head. He does not bark any more. He knows you just the same as I do—just pricks up his ears at first and then sits blinking at the bulbs and listens."

in Every Home

DeALTON VALENTINE

The Government Spent Millions to Give You This

Until a short time ago, wireless was the hobby of rich men and electrical geniuses. And even they didn't have the equipment that you can now get at a minimum expense. This is due to the U. S. Government, which spent literally millions of dollars to perfect wireless apparatus during the war. The result is that now you, or anybody who is shown the way, can have for a few dollars the delights that were formerly limited to the privileged few. You can listen to the finest concerts, enjoy the most popular musical programs, get the latest news bulletins on baseball, on sports, on the events of the world at large.

Edited and Approved by Major General Squier

The fact that this course bears the stamp of approval of Major General Squier shows its value. Major General Squier is Chief of the U. S. Signal Corps and has, more than any other one man, contributed to the stupendous success of the wireless telephone in this country. Because he believes it can be made a wonderful force for good for the young folks, because he thinks it will bind together the home circle more closely than ever, General Squier has lent his aid in the preparation of this special course.

very Day You Are Missing Something Good—Get Busy Now!

The air is full of wireless messages every hour of the day. In the evening, particularly, there are treats which no one ought to miss. Famous people will talk to you, sing for you, amuse you. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY A SINGLE TICKET—You don't have to reserve seats. All you need to do is to mail the coupon below, get these simple lessons at once, and the way will be open for you to the most marvelous entertainment you ever had.

Think of it—one evening's "puttering" on the part of father or the boys will bring you something you can enjoy for a lifetime! Don't delay and let your neighbors get ahead of you. Sign and mail the coupon today.

Review of Reviews Co.
rving Place **New York**

What You Get

LESSON 1.—The Underlying Principles of Radio Communication. By Waldemar Kaempffert, Vice-President and Director of Engineering Service. A glimpse into a new and fascinating world.

LESSON 2.—The Vacuum Tube. By Prof. J. M. Morcroft, of Columbia University. The Aladdin's Lamp of Radio—the marvelous vacuum tube which the Government spent millions to perfect and which acts as sender, receiver and magnifier of sound.

LESSON 3.—Tuning. By John V. L. Hogan, former President of Institute of Radio Engineers. A simple, clearly worded lesson on the principles of tuning, comprising the very heart of the series.

LESSON 4.—The Principles of Reception. By a noted electrical authority. The relation of Radio-Phone to the telephone; General Squier's system of using ordinary electric light or telephone wires for receiving.

LESSON 5.—How to Make Your Own Radio Set. By Raymond Francis Yates, Radio Editor of the New York Evening Mail. How with bits picked from the ash barrel or junk pile you can make most of the parts for a Radio set; precise instructions for making each part; which ones are so cheap that they can be bought more easily than made.

LESSON 6.—How to Set Up Your Own Radio-Phone. By Pierre Boucheron, member of Institute of Radio Engineers. Installing the Radio in the home; the principal hook-ups; how aerials and loops are set up; instructions for wiring and methods of testing; precautions against lightning; regulations of fire underwriters

LESSON 7.—Miscellaneous Information. By Abby Johnson, Instructor in Radio at Y. W. C. A. Glossary of Radio terms; list of private and Government broadcasting stations; laws governing Radio, etc., etc.

The whole edited and approved by Major General Squier, Chief of the Signal Corps of the U. S. Army.

Evbdys. 7-22

Review of Reviews Co.
30 Irving Place
New York City

You may send me, *on approval*, your "Easy Course in Home Radio," complete in seven lessons, by mail postpaid.

I will pay the postman $3.50 when he delivers them, but if for any reason I am not entirely satisfied, I can mail them back at your expense at any time within 10 days after I receive them, and you are to refund my $3.50 in full. There are to be no other payments.

Name ....

Address ....

Everybody's Business

INTERESTING LITTLE ANNOUNCEMENTS CONVENIENTLY CLASSIFIED FOR QUICK READING

Agents and Help Wanted

Big Money and Fast Sales. Every owner buys Gold Initials for his auto. You charge $1.50; make $1.35. Ten orders daily easy. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 41, East Orange, N. J.

Make $25 to $50 Week representing Clows' Famous Philadelphia Hosiery, direct from mill—for men, women, children. Every pair guaranteed. Prices that win. Free book "How to Start" tells the story. George Clows Co., Desk 16, Philadelphia, Pa.

Big Profits. Sell Plate Glass Wind Deflectors, Rear View Mirrors, Aluminum Foot Scrapers and 20 nationally advertised accessories. Car owners, dealers, garages buy one to gross. Write quick for illustrated catalog and agency prices. Rapid Sales Corporation, 16-D, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

All men, women, boys and girls, over 17 years, willing to accept Government Positions, $135. Write Mr. Ozment, 296 St. Louis, immediately.

Agents, $60 to $200 a week, free samples. Gold Sign Letters for Store and Office Windows. Any one can do it. Big demand. Liberal offer to general agents. Metallic Letter Co., 431 Y, No. Clark St., Chicago.

Large manufacturer wants agents; sell advertised brand men's shirts direct to wearer. No capital or experience required. Free samples. Madison Mills, 505 Broadway, New York.

Patent Attorneys

Patents. Write for Free Illustrated Guide Book and Evidence Of Conception Blank. Send model or sketch and description of your invention for our free opinion of its patentable nature. Highest References. Prompt Attention. Reasonable Terms. Victor J. Evans & Co., 752 Ninth, Washington, D. C.

Patents Procured—Trade-Marks Registered—A comprehensive experienced, prompt service for the protection and development of your ideas. Preliminary advice gladly furnished without charge. Booklet of information and form for disclosing idea free on request. Richard B. Owen, 10 Owen Building, Washington, D. C.

Automobiles, etc.

Automobile Owners, Garagemen, Mechanics, Repairmen, send for free copy of our current issue. It contains helpful, instructive information on overhauling, ignition troubles, wiring, carburetors, storage batteries, etc. Over 140 pages, illustrated. Send for free copy today. Automobile Digest, 515 Butler Bldg., Cincinnati.

Stories, Photoplays, etc.

5,000 Photoplay ideas needed. Working girl paid $10,000 for ideas she thought worthless. Yours may be worth more. Experience unnecessary. Details free. Producers League, 390, St. Louis.

Free to writers—A wonderful little book of money-making hints, suggestions, ideas; the A B C of successful Story and Play Writing. Absolutely free. Address Authors' Press, Dept. 78, Auburn, N. Y.

Manuscripts Wanted: Stories, poems, plays, etc. Cash or royalty. Make money spare time. Copyrighted Instruction Book for Writers Free. Submit Mss. or write Literary Bureau, 200, Hannibal, Mo.

Ambitious Writers send today for Free copy, America's leading magazine for writers of photoplays, stories, poems, songs. Instructive, helpful. Writer's Digest, 607 Butler Building, Cincinnati.

Photoplays Wanted for California Producers and Stars. Also want Stories, Articles, etc., for publication. Submit Manuscripts, or, if you are a beginner, write for Free Plot Chart and Details. Harvard Company, 317, San Francisco, Cal.

Business Chances

Get into Business for Yourself! Establish and operate "New System Specialty Candy Factory" in your community. We furnish everything. Money-making opportunity unlimited. Either men or women. Big Candy Booklet free. W. Hillyer Ragsdale, Drawer 94, East Orange, N. J.

Musical Instruments

Violins—Deep, Mellow, Soulful—on easy credit terms. High-grade, wonderful instruments of my own make. Development of many years' expertness. Write for book. Gustav D. Henning, 2424 Gaylord Street, Denver, Colo.

Real Estate

Stanislaus County where the land owns the water. Land for settlers. Write for free booklet, Department E, Stanislaus County Board of Trade, Modesto, California.

BINGHAM SCHOOL, MEBANE, N. C.

ESTABLISHED 1793

AN IDEAL BOYS SCHOOL IN PIEDMONT NORTH CAROLINA

HERE, at Bingham, the spirit of old-time Southern hospitality makes each boy genuinely welcomed. Military organization, begun in 1861. High moral tone. Lovely lawns. Gymnasium. Athletic park. Honor System. Bible and Physical Culture emphasized. Celebrated climate. Outdoor classes. Limited numbers. Sports in variety. 340 acres. Summer camp. A modern school with an ancient name, fame and history. Send for catalogue.

COL. PRESTON LEWIS GRAY, *President*, Box 21, Mebane, N. C.

Everybody's

NUMBER ONE JULY, 1922 VOLUME XLVII

If It's in Everybody's It's a Good Story

CONTENTS

The Remittance-woman *A Complete Novel* ACHMED ABDULLAH 4
Here's mystery, with much adventure, and a little romance thrown in. See page 179
Illustrations by HAROLD ANDERSON

Harum-scarum CLARENCE BUDINGTON KELLAND 54
Gene Tabor wakens to love and some of life's stern realities
Illustration by H. C. EDWARDS

Willie Takes the Roses *A Novelette* COURTNEY RYLEY COOPER 63
You'll find great joy in this vastly amusing story
Illustration by J. CONACHER

The Blood-Ship *A Serial* NORMAN SPRINGER 79
Jack Shreve makes a desperate decision
Illustrations by HENRY PITZ

What Galatea Said LUCIAN CARY 98
A girl can be educated in art but not in love

The First Fifty Years HENRY MYERS 105
An unusual play about married life
Illustrated with photographs

Vengeance HUGH S. MARTIN 113
A brilliant secret-service exploit is planned and executed on the spur of the moment

A Flash of Gold *A Serial* FRANCIS R. BELLAMY 123
The imps of conquest reawaken in Nancy
Illustrations by C. H. TAFFS

The Ladder in the Jungle ALAN SULLIVAN 150
A terrifying experiment—and what came of it
Illustration by ERNEST FUHR

(Continued on next page)

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE RIDGWAY COMPANY
JAMES H. GANNON, President SEWELL HAGGARD, Editor C. H. HOLMES, Secy. & Treas.
SPRING AND MACDOUGAL STREETS, NEW YORK CITY
6, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W. C., England

Entered as Second-Class Matter, August 16, 1899, at the Post-Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the Post-Office Department, Ottawa, Canada. Yearly subscription, $2.50, in advance. Single copy, twenty-five cents. Foreign postage, $1.00 additional. No extra postage for Canada.

EVERYBODY'S takes all reasonable precautions for handling manuscripts submitted, but assumes no responsibility for their safety.
Copyright, 1922, by The Ridgway Company, in the United States and Great Britain.

Swallowed Up *A Serial* **MRS. WILSON WOODROW** 158
Hope is again at the Combine's mercy
Illustrations by R. K. RYLAND

George and Pigweeds **JAMES ASH** 177
A few observations that will rouse much sympathy

Everybody's Chimney Corner 179
Where reader, author and editor get together to talk things over

Prose and Worse **GRIDLEY ADAMS** 181

Everybody's Chestnut Tree 183

Cover Design **CHARLES A. MACLELLAN**

Coming!

An Unusual August Issue

A NEW serial, "The Soul-Scar," by Beldon Duff, author of "Twenty-four Hours," begins, and three others—"Swallowed Up," by Mrs. Wilson Woodrow; "The Blood-Ship," by Norman Springer, and "A Flash of Gold," by Francis R. Bellamy—are continued.

The complete novel will be "Rolling Restaurants," by Richardson Wright. It's refreshing; it's out-of-doors, and it contains humor as well as a good story.

The novelette will be "Is Luck a Lady?" by Harry Sinclair Drago. It is a Western story, and while there is no such a thing as an out-and-out new plot, this story has a new twist, and it contains real people.

Among the short stories will be "The Pearls of Novgorod," a Russian secret-service adventure, by Hugh S. Martin; "Dolly of Logan Square," by James Oppenheim, who has found a different method of telling stories; "The Wife Triumphant," a bit of humor, by Marion Strobel, and "For Justice's Sake," by Maria Moravsky, who goes back to the old Poland for an appealing piece of drama. Then there'll be one of the season's best plays; "Prose and Worse," by Gridley Adams, and "The Chestnut Tree."

August *EVERYBODY'S*—out July 15th

Everybody's

NUMBER ONE JULY, 1922 VOLUME XLVII

BEGINNING in August—
A three-part serial by Beldon Duff
A mystery story stripped to the gears

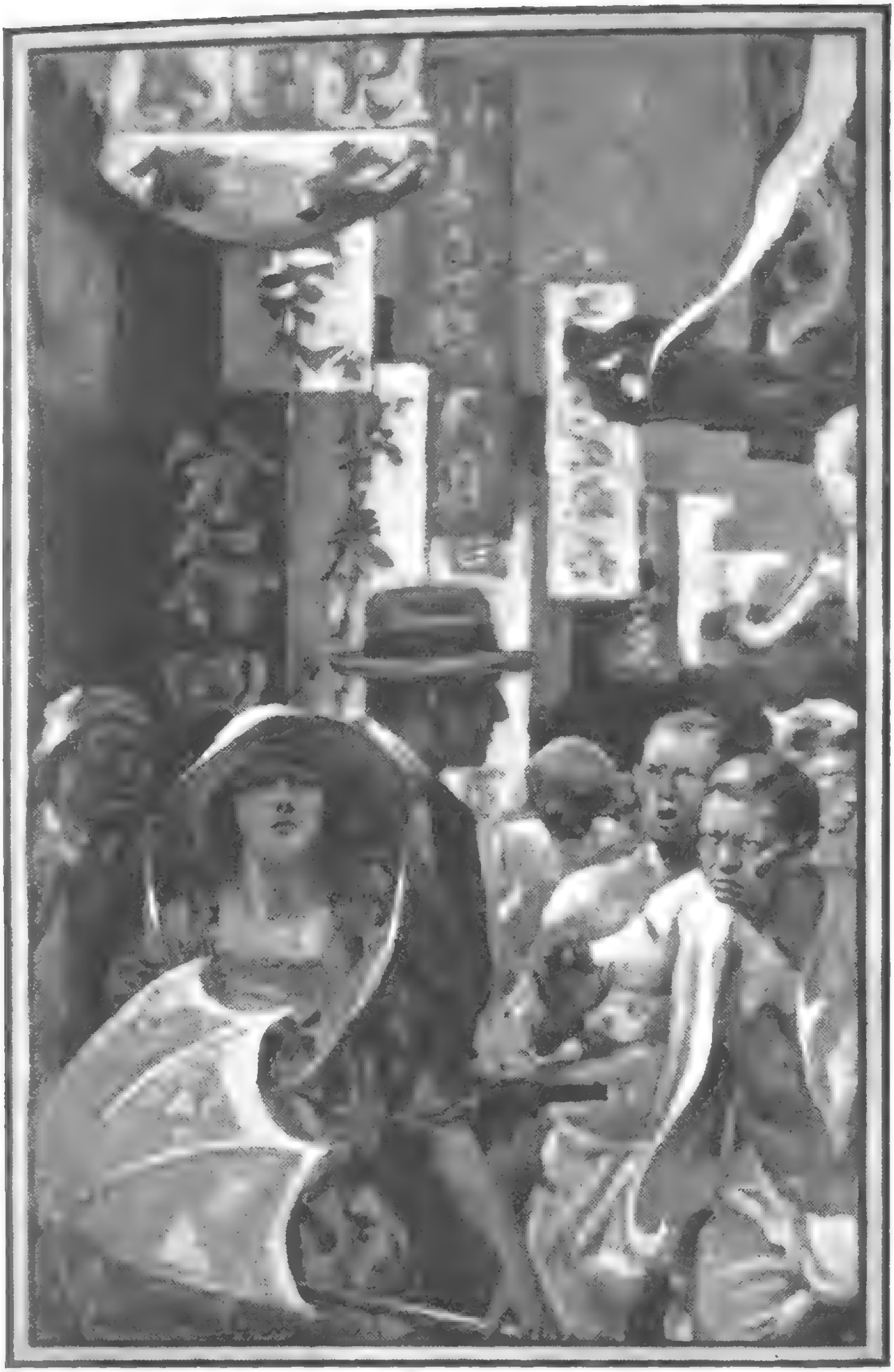
"A MYSTERY STORY, *stripped to its running-gears, where every scene means something, is still a novelty.* Twenty-four Hours *was a most enjoyable change from the usual blundering bunk.*"

This is what a reader wrote about Twenty-four Hours, *by Beldon Duff, which appeared late in 1921, and which brought more congratulatory letters to* Everybody's *than anything it has published in years.*

The new story, The Soul-Scar, *a three-part serial, is a mystery story, intelligently written, in which every word is to the point—a mystery story that doesn't require a diagram.*

The Soul-Scar *will begin in August* Everybody's—*out July 15th. And, by the way, who is Beldon Duff?* See Chimney Corner, page 179.

COPYRIGHT, 1922, BY THE RIDGWAY COMPANY



A rabble of Gilyak Tatars were pelting her with mud when Moses d'Acosta swung round the corner and dispersed the mob at the point of his revolver.

R

He
a
La

I SAY,
dress
a plea
"W
gadly.
"Feel eve
"Quite."
"Good! I
cool before
"Stakes?"
"You bet
drinks and
As Tom V
the billiard-
Maine resor
in the fa
"Yes, fatl
tyred air.
"I want a
"Now?"
"Immedi
She walk
"What is
"I was ir
you've been
of a Tom V
"And wh
take except
Everybod

The Remittance-woman

A Novel Complete in This Issue

Here Is a Mystery Story—Just the Kind of Story for Which a Number of Everybody's Readers Have Asked. It Is Laid in the Orient, and Is Written by a Mystery-Story Master, a Man Who Knows His China

By Achmed Abdullah

Illustrations by Harold Anderson

"I SAY, old bean!" Marie Campbell addressed a long, rather limp youth with a pleasantly innocuous face.

"Wha-at, old thing?" he asked languidly.

"Feel energetic?"

"Quite."

"Good! I'll shoot you a game of cowboy pool before lunch."

"Stakes?"

"You bet," said Marie Campbell. "The drinks and a fifty-spot."

As Tom Van Zandt rose to follow her into the billiard-room of the country club at the Maine resort, a cough she knew well came from the farther door and caused her to turn.

"Yes, father dear?"—with a slightly martyred air.

"I want a few words with you, Marie."

"Now?"

"Immediately!"

She walked up to him.

"What is the trouble?" she asked.

"I was in the next room. I heard what you've been saying to that young jackanapes of a Tom Van Zandt."

"And what did I say you could possibly take exception to?" Marie's voice rose.

"Ugh, calling Tom 'old bean!'" He pronounced the words as if they hurt him. "And him calling you 'old thing.'"

"Dad, that sort of talk happens to be the fad just now in our gang——"

"Gang?"

"Set—if you prefer. Why, Muriel Brewster always calls her father 'darling old turnip.'"

"I don't care what she calls him! I don't care what anybody calls—oh—anybody," he finished weakly.

"What's all the fuss about, then?"

"Your lolling around here with Tom——"

"Nothing much wrong with him except his brain and the color of his socks, dad——"

"And," her father interrupted, "asking him to shoot you a game of cowboy pool—and betting him—what was it?"

"Oh—the drinks and a fifty-spot."

"The drinks and a fifty-spot!" echoed Anthony Campbell, with a groan of almost physical pain. "The drinks and a—It's your language I'm kicking about, and your whole darned conduct. 'Cowboy pool!'" he quoted, with an accent of personal injury. "'Fifty-spot! Old bean!' It isn't becoming a girl. And"—crescendo—"that isn't all!"

613611

"No?"

Her voice was as cold as ice. She was fond of her father, and he of her, in a curiously impersonal manner. But both were impatient and headstrong. Never at odds in vital questions, they clashed frequently on small, negligible side issues. For a number of years—Mrs. Anthony Campbell had died in giving birth to Marie, and there was a challenging silence whenever the girl mentioned her mother—father and daughter had lived in the uncomfortable relations existing between two intimately connected persons who realize that the atmosphere about them is surcharged with innumerable little explosive atoms.

"Darn it all!" her father exclaimed. "You've lost all your feminine sweetness and restraint. You talk like a man, behave like a man, smoke like a man, and"—he wound up accusingly, furiously, yet somehow triumphantly—"you make debts like a man! Here!" And he produced a thick sheaf of varicolored papers.

"Bills?" she inquired, bored.

"Yes." He tossed them on the table.

"Must I look at them all? Now?"

"No. I've made a little compilation of them for your benefit, young lady." He took a typewritten sheet from his pocket. "Here!"

She picked it up and glanced at the items, which totaled up to a respectable sum.

"Surely you can afford to pay it, can't you, dad?"

"Of course. That isn't the question."

"What is?"

"The sort of stuff you spend my money on. For instance, I don't mind this seven hundred dollars for frocks and frills and all that. Nor this—Madame—oh—Hickamadoodle's bill for a dozen hats. But—look at this—and this—and that!"

She did.

"Polo-mallets, one hundred and seventy-five dollars. English hunting-saddle, ninety-five. Yes?" She looked up questioningly.

"Go on. There!" He pointed at another detailed row of items. "Walking-sticks! Sporting-rifle! Hunting-crop! Cigarettes! Poker-chips! And—breeches! By God—*breeches!*"

"But," she rejoined mildly, "you told me only the other day that I could buy myself a new outfit——"

"A woman's! Not a man's! Breeches! Cigarettes! Poker-chips!"

"What are you going to do about it, dad?"

"I'm going to give you your choice. Do you want to be a girl, and behave like one, or be treated like a man?"

"You mean that, dad?"

"Absolutely!"

"All right," she said. "In the future you may treat me as if I were a man."

"In everything?"

"Rather."

He looked at her, slightly incredulous.

"You realize what you are choosing?"

"Quite, dad."

"You are willing to take the same chance I took when I was a young chap?"

"Yes."

"Marie," he said, "I accept your choice. You will start your new career at once. To-morrow we go back to town. I'll give you a check there. I'll make it a thousand——"

"Why a thousand?" she drawled.

"To start you in life."

"Did you say you'd give me the same chance you had when you went out into the world?"

"Yes. Well?"—as he saw her smile.

"Dad," she said slowly, "last year I went to Scotland—and saw grandfather. He told me things about you—when you were a young man."

"Oh!" Mr. Anthony Campbell was getting embarrassed.

"He told me something about how agreeably surprised he had been when you finally made good."

"What has all that to do with——"

"Wait! He told me how irresponsible you had been for years after leaving college—how at last, in desperation, he asked you to leave Scotland for Scotland's good. In fact, you came over to America as a remittance-man, didn't you?"

"I did. But—I *did* make good."

"Never mind that. I'm speaking about your chance in life—your first start. Grandfather gave you a thousand dollars every three months on condition that you'd keep away from the Old Country. True, isn't it?"

"Yes," he admitted in a low voice.

HIS thoughts roamed back down the vista of the gray, dead years—his impetuous youth, two terms at Oxford, expulsion on a number of charges of which drinking was the mildest. Scrapes, right and left. His father had sent him to America, and he had become a remittance-man. A thousand dollars every quarter, and it had never lasted more than a month—whisky, cards, dice, women, horses. And step by step he had drifted down the ladder until one day, suddenly, something like a colored ball of glass had shivered to pieces in his brain, had shown himself to himself in the naked, pitiless light of self-understanding.

That was in the Northwest, not far from the Washington-British Columbia boundary-line. He was completely broke. But that day the little red wilderness gods had piped to him, and he had followed their call, across the boundary-line into British Columbia, north, up along the Michel Creek—to find what he might. He had trekked on foot, finding occasional work in mines and lumber camps. Then one day, clearing the snow from the ground to make a fire, he had found a little crumbly, black powder—coal!

He had been too poor to buy dynamite. And so Jack Henderson, the Crow's Nest Pass storekeeper, who was nearly as poor as himself, grub-staked him for all he could. He had worked with pick and shovel all that winter into the summer. But he had found his first true vein and to-day Campbell & Henderson—the same Jack Henderson of the Crow's Nest Pass store—were the biggest coal operators in the Northwest, solidly rich, with offices and town houses in New York and country places in Maine and on Long Island.

Since then his life had been a steady routine of work and success. He had interrupted it only once, a little over twenty-two years ago, when he had gone on a trip round the world, and had spent over a year in China, whence he had returned, white-haired, rather bitter, with a little baby girl in his arms. Yes—he had curtly told Jack Henderson and his other friends—he had married in China. And—yes—his wife had died in childbirth.

To-day the beginnings of his fortune seemed very far away; very far away, almost unreal, seemed the days when he had been a remittance-man.

But he was an honest man.

"Yes," he said to his daughter; "once I was a remittance-man, and my father sent me a thousand dollars every three months."

"Very well," she went on coolly. "You promised me the same chance you had. Only—make it fifteen hundred a quarter instead of a thousand."

"Fifteen hundred? Why——"

"High cost of living," she explained.

"All right," he gave in finally. "Fifteen hundred a quarter." He looked at her narrowly, to see if she were bluffing. "Of course on the same conditions which my father——"

"Yes," she interrupted. "I'll get my remittances just as long as I stay away from America——"

"Any time you want to come back—and behave like a girl——"

"I know. But I'm really tickled to get away. Always been crazy to go to China."

"China?" He looked up, startled.

"Yes, dad. I was born there, wasn't I? What other reason could there be—except perhaps inherited *Wanderlust?*"

"Yes—yes." An expression of suspicion left his face.

"Well—there you are! I shall start this week. About my remittances, where to send them and all that, I suppose you'll want me to talk to your secretary."

"Marie!" came his half-choked appeal, his pride giving way a little to his love.

He held out a nervous hand and she took it in both hers. But her voice was one of finality.

"It's quite settled, dad."

"Very well." He lit a cigar. "By the way—remember that little Chinese vase you had ever since you were a baby?"

"You mean that brittle thing with the two funny, wriggly gold dragons?"

"That's the one. Take it along. And"—he coughed, evidently searching for words—"don't show it to people—and don't talk about it—unless"—he hesitated—"unless you absolutely have to."

"But—what——"

"I am Scotch." He gave a forced laugh. "And so you must forgive my Scotch superstitions. But—is it a promise?"

"About the vase?"

"Yes."

"All right, dad. I promise."

ALL this had happened over six months before, and now Marie Campbell was in her hotel at Canton, at the edge of the Shameen, the Foreign Concession, with a view, in the distance, of White Cloud

Mountain. She wondered what she should do. Of course she could cable to her father, and the reply would be immediate and generous. But it was not alone her inherited pride which prevented her from doing so. It was also that, somehow, even in these few months, China had got beneath her skin in a strange way. For, in her non-thinking moments, there was always about her a curious impression that she belonged here. Yet—what was there for her to do?

Two weeks before, her quarterly check had come. She had spent every cent of it in the gorgeous silk and jade shops near the Gate of Eternal Purity. And here was Liu Po-Yat, the Manchu chambermaid, with a note from Monsieur Paul Pailloux, the hotel manager, asking Miss Campbell to settle her bill before ten o'clock the next morning, or——

"Or?"

She turned to Liu Po-Yat, who looked down at her from her great height, her handsome face inscrutable beneath the glory of her raven-black hair.

Then, suddenly, the Manchu woman smiled.

"Miss Campbell," she said in perfect English, "I see no necessity for the 'or.' "

"Don't you?"

Marie Campbell was surprised that Liu Po-Yat, who, ever since she had come to the Great Eastern Hotel to live, had not opened her mouth except to answer in gliding Mongol monosyllables to the few Chinese words—enough to ask for fresh towels and ice-water—Marie had managed to pick up, was able to speak English—fluent, careful English, not the pidgin of the river coolies.

"No," Liu Po-Yat replied to her question. "You see—there is Mr. Moses d'Acosta——"

"Look here——"

"Mr. d'Acosta is waiting for you downstairs in the *salon*," Liu Po-Yat finished imperturbably.

Mr. Moses d'Acosta had seen the light of day fifty years earlier in Constantinople in a crooked, dim street a stone's throw from the Yedi Koulé Kapoussi, the Gate of the Seven Towers. He spoke Turkish as fluently as he spoke Arabic and French and English and German and the Levantine *lingua franca*. But his native tongue was an archaic Spanish, which he used, even in preference to Hebrew, when he chanted his prayers to Jahveh, the God of Abraham and of Jacob. For he was a "Spaniol," a descendant of one of those noble Spanish-Jewish families who were driven from their native land when the last of the Moorish caliphs went down under the straight swords of Castile and Leon and who migrated, some to Morocco and Tunis, others to Turkey.

To-day he was one of the richest men in the Levant, with interests that reached from Peking to London. He was a typical Jew in so far as he was both a doer and a dreamer, rarest, most irresistible of combinations, and that—this according to Mademoiselle Claire Droz, a Parisian *chanteuse* whose light feet for years had trod the rickety boards of occasional theatres catering to European exiles in Oriental lands—he swayed habitually emotional incoherences into intellectual coherences.

MARIE had met him first a week before in a mazed bazaar near the Temple of the Five Hundred Lohans and, the same night, in the hotel lobby. She had noticed him immediately. Nobody could help noticing him—very tall, broad, dark, with black, inscrutable eyes, the nose an enormous predatory beak, the chin flagging and combative. He had bowed to her deeply, and she had inclined her head curtly in return.

Then, only two days ago, she had met him again, as she came from a Chinese shop where, with utter recklessness, she had spent a hundred dollars, the tail-end of her quarterly remittance, for an exquisite vase of Ning-yan porcelain. The shop being in the slums of Canton, a rabble of Gilyak Tatars, former soldiers, discharged since the Chinese revolution and holding the "foreign devils" responsible for the downfall of the Manchu dynasty, had followed her and were pelting her with mud when Moses d'Acosta swung round the corner, dispersed the mob at the point of his revolver, and seen her home to the hotel, where he, too, lived.

On the way there he had talked to her—at first about impersonal matters, then suddenly he had made a remark which had surprised her.

"Good ship—the *Empress of Malaysia*."

"Oh, you know that——"

"That you took the C. P. R. liner to Hongkong—and then came up here on the British Navigation ship? Of course."

"How do you know?"

"Curiosity is my middle name, I suppose." And, suddenly, disconcertingly, "Why did you decide all at once to come to China?"

"Oh—I—" She had found herself uneasy and nonplused, and when, back at the hotel, he had asked her to dine with him that very night, she had been conscious of her desire to accept, although her lips, almost mechanically, had formed the glib white lie: "Thank you, but I'd rather not—headache, you know."

"Very well, Miss Campbell," he had replied. "Some other time." And he had repeated questioningly, "Some other time," and had added, almost in a whisper, "Our tastes are the same, you know."

"In what?"

"In Chinese porcelain, don't you think?"

He had not even waited for her answer, but had walked away and, looking after him, she had seen him step up to and exchange greetings with an elderly, enormously stout Manchu dressed in brocaded silk.

"Sun Yu-Wen, the famous Pekingese banker," the desk clerk had told her in answer to her question.

"MR. D'ACOSTA is waiting for you down-stairs," repeated Liu Po-Yat. "He has expressed to me his hope that you will approve of the dinner which he took the liberty of ordering."

"Dinner—you said he ordered—" Marie was thoroughly roused.

"Gray molossol caviar as first course," went on the Manchu woman. "He had noticed in the dining-room that you are fond of it."

"I never had any caviar since I came here."

"No? Perhaps, then, on board ship."

"He wasn't there."

"Somebody may have told him," said the Manchu woman. "Anyway, it will be served to-night. He gets his own caviar direct from Astrakhan—through the courtesy of Prince Pavel Kokoshkine."

Suddenly, unreasoningly, the situation struck Marie as startlingly amusing.

"Liu," she asked, "far be it from me to butt into your private affairs. But—*what* do you know about molossol caviar? *How* do you know? And *who* taught you to express your views in such ripping English, old dear?"

The Manchu woman looked at her for a long time, silently, doubtingly. Then she seemed to make up her mind.

"My father," she said—and she said it as a New Yorker might mention that his people were Knickerbockers, not boastingly, but as a simple statement of fact—"was the hereditary captain-general of the Seventh Manchu Banner Corps. He was a cousin-in-blood to the Son of Heaven, a *nurhachi*—an iron-capped prince. For years he was Chinese minister for the old Buddha, the dowager empress, in different European capitals. I was educated abroad. I am"—again she spoke unboastingly—"an aristocrat."

"Oh, you are? And to-day you are—" She indicated the other's neat uniform.

"To-day," came the rejoinder, "I am still an aristocrat, still a cousin to the Son of Heaven."

"But the Son of Heaven has been deposed and imprisoned."

"Indeed?"

Marie laughed.

"Not a very sound believer in the Chinese republic, in lusty young Democracy, are you?" she asked.

"Are *you?*"

"What have I to do with China? I am an American."

"Oh, yes"—the other gave a gliding smile—"I almost forgot."

Marie smiled back. She liked the other better and better.

"Of course," she said, "being a woman and an American, I am curious. Tell me—why didn't you ask me to mind my own business?"

"Because I trust you."

"Why do you trust me, a stranger?"

"Perhaps I do not consider you altogether a stranger."

"Flattering, old dear!"

"And perhaps," continued the other, "it is just a woman's whim."

" 'Sisters under the skin,' eh? All right. Let's stick together. But— Which reminds me—*why* Moses d'Acosta?"

"He has money," coolly replied Liu Po-Yat.

But the other was not deceived.

"Now you're giving me an Oriental half-truth. Of course he has the tin. But there are also other reasons why you want me to dine with him."

"Perhaps," smiled Liu Po-Yat.

"That's right." Marie laughed. "Pull the Buddha stuff! No way of persuading you to tell me the real truth?"

"Some other time."

"Very well. The main question is: Would you dine with him if you were me?"

"If I had to." Liu Po-Yat pointed to the manager's dunning note.

"I guess you're right. But—what'll I do with him? I feel a bit like the fox-terrier who runs after the motor-car. What'll he do with it after he catches up with it?"

"Remember that you are a woman—and clever—and beautiful," the Manchu replied. She turned to the telephone. "Shall I tell the desk clerk?"

"No; go down yourself and speak to Mr. d'Acosta. Bring him up with you in half an hour. No, thanks!"—to the other's offer. "Far be it from me to ask a cousin of the Son of Heaven to help me with my gown. Anyway, I'm going to wear my rose charmeuse, and it's a self-hooker. Wait"—as the Manchu was about to open the door. "Tell him that I prefer my champagne rather sweet—Russian style."

"Do you?" asked Liu Po-Yat. "So does the Prince Pavel Kokoshkine. You will get on very well with him,"

"Is the prince going to be at dinner tonight?"

"No. The prince would like to dine with you to-morrow night."

"Wh-what?"

"If it is agreeable to you, Prince Kokoshkine would be honored. He will call for you to-morrow night at seven."

LIU PO-YAT had shuffled out of the room before Marie could find words to do justice to her stupefaction. Two dinner invitations, from two strangers! And she was enough of a woman of the world to realize that both invitations were the result of her financial embarrassment, that somehow Moses d'Acosta as well as Prince Kokoshkine must have found out about it.

"Can't be helped," she thought, as she chose a necklace of mutton-fat jade, looked at her other jewels, considering if she should pawn them.

"Not yet," she decided.

She rummaged in her jewel-box; then, when her fingers encountered the little Chinese vase which her father, explaining his wish by a reference to his Scotch superstitions, had asked her to take along, she hesitated. She liked it. It was no bigger than a thumb-nail, but absolutely perfect in shape and color, green, with two gold dragons as handles, and painted on the inside with figures so small that one would need a magnifying glass to make them out. She picked it up now; then, obeying a curious instinct, slipped it in the fold of her girdle.

She surveyed herself in the mirror, smiled back at her reflection in the glass.

"You'll have to play salamander tonight," she addressed herself. "And—to-morrow night—" She wondered. She had never seen the Russian, but knew about him, as did all Canton—Prince Pavel Kokoshkine—a figure both romantic and pathetic!

He was a Russian aristocrat of the old régime, who had fought through the war as a captain of Cossacks. Like many of his class, he had found himself unprepared for the brutal sweep of the revolution. He did not know what to do. The basis of his life was smashed. So he left Russia and, embittered, like many others of his race and caste, turned his eyes eastward, to Mongolia, China—the yellow lands whence, centuries earlier, certain of his Tatar ancestors had come. China, caught in the backwash of its own revolutionary troubles, with the Manchus intriguing in the north, the Japanese in Shantung, and ultraradical elements in the south, was more than ready to avail itself of his military knowledge, though in his own country he had been identified with reactionary politics. To-day he was a major-general in the Chinese Republican army, stationed in Canton, with headquarters not far from the Nan-Hai prison and in command over the Southern Shenchi Ying, or "Augustly Divine Mechanism Army," as the Chinese call their foreign-drilled field forces. He seldom set foot in the Shameen, the European quarter, avoided all intercourse with Europeans and Americans as much as he could, and lived in the manner of a mandarin—and he had asked Marie to dine with him to-morrow night!

She was perturbed as she thought of it, and felt rather relieved when the door opened and Liu Po-Yat announced Mr. Moses d'Acosta.

"Good-evening," he said.

"Good-evening, Mr. d'Acosta."

He was completely sure of himself, neither brazen nor malapert in the way he bent over her hand nor embarrassingly apologetic for his unconventional invitation. Suddenly he walked over to the center-table, picked up the hotel bill and tore it negligently across and across.

"That's all right," he said, in answer to Marie's expostulation. "It was just a silly mistake on the part of Monsieur Pailloux."

"But——"

"What have I to do with it? Why, I own the hotel." He bowed. "You will be my guest, Miss Campbell."

"But——"

"My dear young lady, there are no obligations. I've been often the guest of—" He coughed, was silent.

"Whose guest?"

"Well, shall we call him your uncle? Or shall we call him Mr. Mavropoulos? Or shall we go straight back into ancient history and call him—ah—what is the old Tatar title he loved so?—the Ssu Yueh, eh, Miss Campbell?"

Marie recoiled before the avalanche of meaningless words. Yet, looking at the man's cold eyes, she knew that meaning there was in them, grave, ominous.

"But—what——"

Almost instinctively she choked the questions that crowded to her lips as she happened to catch the Manchu woman's eyes, with a sharp message of warning in their depths.

"Quite so," she went on lamely. "Shall we go down-stairs?"

"Just a moment, please!"

He crossed the room in a leisurely manner. In the farther corner stood an inlaid and lacquered rosewood table that supported the many Chinese curios on which she had squandered her quarter's remittance during her strolls through the bazaars—bronze and jade, but mostly porcelain. He picked up and examined a few of the pieces.

"Charming!" he said, as he held up a tiny vase of crackled ruby and green. He looked at her narrowly. "Pardon me——"

"Yes, Mr. d'Acosta?"

"Have you, by any chance, a specimen of Tchou-fou-yao porcelain?"

There was something in the innocent-enough question which filled her with uneasiness, caused her to look, as if for support, at the Manchu woman who stood there silent and rigid. She could have sworn that d'Acosta had intercepted the look, that a slight tremor of rage, quickly suppressed, was running through him. The Manchu woman coughed. Something dramatic was in the atmosphere, something almost sinister—and Marie gave a little shudder.

"Why," she replied, and she had to control herself to keep from stammering, "I am not an expert when it comes to Chinese art. I just like these things—hardly know their names——"

"Of course you don't!" said Mr. d'Acosta, with a gliding wink in his eyes that gave the lie to her words. "Shall we go down to dinner before the Chinese cook gives way to his racial leanings and puts rats' tails into our caviar?"

He said this with a laugh. But again Marie Campbell was conscious of a tragic undercurrent.

She left the room and walked quickly down-stairs to the crimson-and-gold dining-room, the man by her side, both talking vaguely about the weather.

The last she saw, as she half turned on the threshold of her room, was the Manchu woman staring after her, an inscrutable message in her eyes.

THE scene in the dining-room was typical of the snobbish, self-centered foreign colony in the Shameen. The place might have been a Broadway cabaret, a restaurant in the Chicago Loop, a London supper club, or a shimmering, glistening dance-place of the Parisian boulevards. Marie saw, felt. It depressed her, and she was grateful to Moses d'Acosta, who, helping her to caviar and champagne, said, with quick, almost feminine intuition:

"Don't you mind them. I know how you feel about China."

"Do you?"

"Of course. And these people do not matter. China is like a huge lump of rubber. You can make an impression on it by pressing hard. But take your fingers away—and the rubber will jump straight back into place. There will not even be a mark left. And these people here—with their jewels and their low-cut dresses and their millions—they'll die some day—and China will live."

"Why, I've been told that you are a

multimillionaire yourself—and your interests in China——"

"Quite right. I am rich. But I am an idealist, a constructive idealist. I am a good friend of China. I wish I could make you see it. Then perhaps you would help me, instead of trying to——"

"What?"

"Play 'possum—that's what you call it in America, eh? Never mind. We'll talk about it some other time."

She was about to tell him that, honestly, she did not know what he was driving at.

"Mr. d'Acosta," she began, "I assure you——"

"Never mind, Miss Campbell," he repeated.

A little later he referred again to her apocryphal uncle.

"Mr. Mavropoulos used to like this place. It amused him."

"Mr. Mavropoulos?"

"Call him the Ssu Yueh; call him by his Tatar title, if you prefer. I don't think the republic will mind."

He accompanied his remarks with a low laugh, as if to warn her that she wouldn't tell the truth, and that he knew she wouldn't.

"I hope you are enjoying this little party," he said. "I owe it to your uncle's memory to be nice to you."

"I don't call that a compliment," she replied, and, the next moment, his words echoing in her mind, she caught at something in their meaning—when he had mentioned her apocryphal uncle's "memory." The little mischievous imp in her heart caused her now to probe more deeply into the mystery she felt gathering about her, to throw out a slightly grieved:

"Did you say my uncle's *memory?* Is he—" She paused, wondering how far she dare go.

"Yes," d'Acosta replied; "he is dead. They got him. He always knew they would. And you hadn't really heard that he died?"

"No," she replied, truthfully enough, tremendously thrilled, curious what would come next.

"And yet you left America—came here——"

"On an impulse." Again she spoke the truth.

"Strange coincidence!" He stared at her, his fingers nervously curled round the stem of his champagne-glass. "Then, I take it, you haven't seen the papers recently. The *North China Gazette* had quite an article—sensational—but only so to the initiated. Here you are!" He drew from his pocket a newspaper clipping. "Outsiders wouldn't be able to make head or tail of it. It's put in the form of a literary curiosity, a translation of some ancient bit of Chinese mysticism— I suppose you have the cipher——"

"I'll read it afterward," she replied, cramming the clipping into her purse.

"Very well." And, to her disappointment, he led the conversation back to impersonalities, to interrupt himself, with the same disconcerting suddenness and to ask her again the curiously innocent, curiously disturbing question he had put to her in her room.

"Tell me, Miss Campbell; have you not really a specimen of Tchou-fou-yao porcelain?"

"But"—she was becoming embarrassed at the tremendous earnestness that throbbed in his accents—"Mr. d'Acosta——"

"Tchou-fou-yao," he insisted. "The porcelain of emperors! A tiny vase no bigger than a thumb-nail, with two gold dragons snarling over its lizard-green surface, an orifice belled like the cup of a flower, and painted on the inside with infinitesimal figures."

MARIE'S hand stole to her girdle. She felt the little vase there, said to herself that it seemed to tally with the one of which d'Acosta was speaking. She felt sorry for the man. Should she tell him? Should she show him the vase? Then she remembered her father's strange warning the day they had parted: "Don't show it to people, and don't talk about it unless you absolutely have to." She gave a little shudder of apprehension. What was this mystery into which she felt herself drawn as if into a whirlpool? This stranger knew about it, the Manchu maid, and also her father. What was there back of it all? Why had her father never spoken to her about it? Then she recalled her own feelings during the last few months; how, subconsciously, it had seemed to her that China mattered more to her than she knew and that—yes; the realization came like a shock—that she mattered to China.

She felt disturbed, nervous, but decided to hedge for time. She would talk to the Manchu maid, beg her to explain. She would cable and write to her father. In the mean time, she would fence with d'Acosta.

"Why," she said, "you talk like a typical collector—the frantic sort, you know, who holds his friends' Wedgwood teacups upside down and then pronounces them to be forgeries!"

But her humor was forced, and he brushed it aside with an impatient gesture.

"Don't play with me," he said. "Can't I make you see? Can't I make you understand?" He was tremendously in earnest, and for a moment Marie felt like confessing that she had been playing with him. But, somehow, she again recalled her father's warning. "But—Miss Campbell—please—won't you—" He slurred, stopped.

Again the little mischievous imp rose in her heart and whispered to her to fathom this mystery.

"Mr. d'Acosta," she said ingenuously, "why don't you tell me the truth?"

"Eh?" He looked up sharply.

"I mean, rather, why don't you put *all* your cards on the table?"

"All my cards? But—you know them all!"

"Do I?" she countered.

"You know you do! Don't you—won't you understand? It is not a question with me of dollars and cents. No, no!"

She felt nonplused. Then she decided to aim another shot into the blue, recalling certain conversations between her father and his partner, Jack Henderson, when they were searching for the usual explanation through which too rich people like to excuse their greed to themselves.

"Power," she said serenely. "It's power you're after, Mr. d'Acosta!"

"No. Power—why—that's an old tale to me. I am bored with power. What I want is something big, basic! And if you have any of your uncle's blood, you would——"

"Here's my mysterious uncle again!" thought Marie, and the next moment Mr. d'Acosta features were blotted into a reddish-purple smudge as a great shadow fell across the table.

Marie, looking up, beheld the Pekingese banker, Sun Yu-Wen, whom, a few days earlier, she had watched in such animated conversation with her host. His immense body was dressed in a rather extravagantly Pekingese style—a long robe of orange-colored, satin-lined grenadine silk embroidered with black bats, and on his round cap a button of transparent red, the emblem of a mandarin of the first class, worn in calm defiance of the fact that the republic had forbidden the wearing of imperial insignia.

"Ah—good-evening!" His words were soft; his fat, ivory-yellow, passionless face was suffused with a patient kindliness. Yet, for all this kindliness, he gave Marie the impression of something impersonal, very ancient, very tired, even, in a passive way, unhuman.

MR. D'ACOSTA had risen and bowed. The other had returned the salutation, Chinese fashion, with his hands clasped over his huge chest. Both looked at each other tensely, observantly. To Marie, it was like a scene out of a play—a moment of tremendous suspense, of waiting—for what? "Enemies"—the melodramatic thought came to her—"bitter enemies!" Yet the smiles on keen Semitic and bland Mongol faces were not sneers. It was a smile from the heart, of genuine mutual liking.

Still, as she heard the gliding Manchu words which presently the Chinaman addressed to d'Acosta, although she could not make out the meaning of a single syllable, she sensed in them a certain minatory undercurrent, and saw it confirmed by the look of almost alarmed inquiry that came into the Levantine's eyes. He replied in Manchu, in tones that were clear, high-pitched, but somehow marred and tainted. Then, on another buzzing, purring word from the Pekingese, d'Acosta shrugged his shoulders, spread his lean hands with a gesture as if submitting to the inevitable, and turned to her.

"Miss Campbell," he said, "allow me to present Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen."

"Charmed," she replied. Her uneasy fear came and went in waves.

Sun Yu-Wen lowered his obese bulk a little gingerly into the frail Louis-Quinze chair. He smiled at d'Acosta.

"I suppose," he said in English, "it is all settled."

"No, I told you—nothing is settled," the

Levantine replied, with the suspicion of a snarl.

"Oh, is that so?"

Sun Yu-Wen turned to Marie, and again the fear of this secret dramatic combat of unknown forces into which she felt herself drawn against her will rose in her soul. She was on the point of blurting out the truth—that she knew nothing, that she had simply followed a hoydenish, adventurous impulse, that she was sorry—when, as from a great distance, she heard Sun Yu-Wen's voice, soft, insistent.

"Ah—then there is still hope for me?"

"Listen—I—" She could not go on. Her confession choked her. She looked pitifully at Sun Yu-Wen.

"Never mind," he said. "Presently you will decide. Presently you will follow your whim or, perhaps, your conviction and play—ah—Fate to a very great issue." He turned to d'Acosta. "My friend," he continued, "it is strange indeed how back of everything there is the soft hand of woman, how the fate of the many millions hangs always and always from a woman's jeweled earrings—in China—in Europe—belike in the moon. A woman, wilful and stubborn as only a woman can be—or a cat! What does it say in the classics? '*Po-nien-jou-chi i-tien-jou-ki*'—'Stubborn as a rock, hard as ancient lacquer.' "

Again he addressed Marie.

"An appropriate quotation, don't you think?" he asked. "Perhaps—although you do not speak the language of your native land"—and Marie looked up, startled, when she understood that the fact of China being her birthplace was known to the mandarin—"you are familiar with our literature, at least in translation. Perhaps"—he lowered his voice—"you even take an interest in such rubbish as a brittle bit of Tchou-fou-yao porcelain."

MARIE could not restrain herself any longer. With a choked mumble of apology, she rose and almost ran from the dining-room.

Her first impulse was to go to her room. But she reflected that perhaps one or both of the men would follow her. Finally she thought of an up-stairs parlor, reserved for the use of women guests. She went to it quickly. It was empty except for a soft-footed Mongol maid. She sat down and lit a cigarette, and it was not long before calmer reflection came to her and with it, typically, her American sense of humor and her inherited Scots common sense of building up and investigating logically, constructively, fearlessly.

She walked over to the writing-desk, found pencil and cable-blanks, and scribbled rapidly:

> ANTHONY CAMPBELL,
> Broad Street, New York, U. S. A.
> Cable immediately, care Grand Hotel, particulars about vase; also let me know about Uncle Mavropoulos.

She stopped, considered if she should ask for money; then decided she would not. She knew her father would order her to return by the next steamer, and she was not yet ready. She was still a remittance-woman, and here was China, mysterious, fascinating, beckoning. Here was adventure! She called to the maid:

"Take this down to the desk. Have them charge it up."

When the maid had left, Marie remembered d'Acosta's allusion to the article in the *North China Gazette* in regard to the death of her mythical uncle, who seemed to have gone under a variety of names. She took the clipping from her purse and looked at it. It was entitled:

TRANSLATION OF AN ANCIENT EXAMPLE OF TATAR-CHINESE MYSTICISM

and read:

> Omniscient Gautama! Far-seeing, all-seeing Tathagata! How multiform the consolation of Thy Word! How marvelous Thy Understanding! Was this, then, also one of the myriad illusions painted before Thy eyes by Mara in the black, black night when the earth rocked like a chariot of war in the shock of battle?

"My word!" She put down the clipping. "Just about as clear as pea soup!"

She was still puzzled when, a few minutes later, the maid returned.

"Send off the cable?" asked Marie.

"Yes, missy."

"Thanks! By the way, you couldn't find out if those two gentlemen I dined with are still in the hotel?"

"Yes, missy. They dlove off in callaige five, ten minute back."

"Thank you again."

She crossed over to the telephone, gave the desk clerk strict instructions that she was at home to nobody, and took the elevator up to her room, deciding on the way that now was the time to "pump" the Manchu maid.

SHE reached her room, switched on the electric light and went toward her bedroom. Then, suddenly, she gave a shriek and stared straight ahead. For there, on the bedroom threshold, she saw Liu Po-Yat stretched out in a darkening pool of blood. Marie rushed up to the woman.

Liu Po-Yat was bleeding to death from a dozen knife-wounds. She had almost reached a state of coma. Marie gathered all her courage. She knelt down and lifted up the bleeding head.

The freezing lips tried to speak. A gurgle came from the contracting throat. Finally a few incoherent words peaked out.

"*Chuen to yan*—" And again, "*Chuen to yan*——"

"Please!" implored Marie. "Speak English—oh, please——"

"*Chuen to yan*," repeated the other. "*Chuen to yan*"—as if trying to give a message.

"*Chuen to yan?*" echoed Marie.

"Yes! Remember! Tell him——"

"Who?"

"Your—friend."

"Tell me! Who is the friend you mean? D'Acosta?" Liu Po-Yat shook her head negatively. "The mandarin?"

"No"—the dying woman gurgled out the words—"not friends—those—like other will be—" Suddenly she revived a little. She lifted her right hand in a supreme spasm of energy; then, even as her body was stiffening, she pointed into the bedroom.

Marie rose, crossed the threshold. She found her jewel-box upset, its contents strewn over the table itself, a few scattered on the floor.

Her hand went to her girdle. The little Tchou-fou-yao vase—that's what the murderers had been looking for!

No piece of jewelry was missing.

Who was the assassin? Moses d'Acosta? Sun Yu-Wen? But the next moment she dismissed the suspicion. For she had dined with them, and the Chinese maid in the parlor had seen them drive off. And the dying woman had not mentioned either of them, but had spoken repeatedly, insistingly of "*Chuen to yan*"—whatever the Mongol monosyllables meant.

"Who, then, did it?" she asked herself. "And what is this vase? What is its sinister significance?"

She took it out, looked at it, examined the lizard-green surface, the tiny painting on the inside.

What was its meaning, its secret? And what had she to do with it? Or, perhaps, came the next thought, her mother, who had died in giving her birth, here in China, where her father had married her, whence he had returned white-haired and rather bitter and taciturn—her mother, whom her father never mentioned, or her grandfather?

But murder had been committed, and she realized that she must notify the hotel management.

She went down-stairs and entered the private office of Monsieur Paul Pailloux, the manager, a pudgy Parisian exile who carried his black beard ahead of him like a battering-ram and who bowed before her with opulent superciliousness.

"Ah—Miss Campbell!" he said. "That bill—it was a mistake——"

"It isn't about the bill."

"No? Then—what can I do for you?"

"You can send for the police."

"Police? Ah—your delicious American sense of humor——"

Marie's father would have been shocked if he could have heard her slangy reply.

"Cut it out! There's nothing humorous in murder!"

"Murder? Ah—*nom de Dieu!* Murder?"

"Exactly." And she told him.

Her immediate reaction after she had finished telling Monsieur Pailloux was one of surprise—at the other's lack of surprise.

"Are you sure, Miss Campbell?" he asked.

"What do you mean—am I sure? Didn't I see her? Didn't she talk to me before she died?"

"What did she say?"

"Just a few words."

"What exactly, Miss Campbell?" insisted the Frenchman.

It was partly her revolt at the man's cold-blooded curiosity, partly obedience to a peculiar impulse telling her that Liu Po-Yat's dying words had not been meant for everybody's ears which caused her to reply evasively:

"I couldn't make out. I was naturally excited."

"Of course," he said soothingly.

"Let's go up to my room."

"No," he said in a kindly manner. "Such a harrowing experience—I sha'n't permit you—" He walked to the door. "I shall go up-stairs myself and investigate. Rest here until I return." He left the office, closing the door.

It was a small room, hardly big enough to hold a roll-top desk, three chairs, and, wedged in between desk and wall, a little safe with its door swinging open.

Marie waited, ten minutes, twenty, twenty-five. Finally, impatient, she stepped out, but as she was about to turn toward the elevator, the house detective, a half-caste with a flat, brutish face, stopped her.

"Please wait in there," he said. "Monsieur Pailloux just sent for me. And he wants no scandal, no excitement—you understand, don't you?"

SHE went back into the office and sat down. She was in a conflicting state of mind. She felt deeply moved at the Manchu woman's tragic death. She also felt conscious of a personal loss, rather more selfish. For Liu Po-Yat had evidently been familiar with the coiling of the mysterious forces which were sucking Marie into their whirlpool, had doubtless only been waiting for a propitious moment to take the American girl into her confidence. And now she was dead; Marie felt very lonely and young and homesick.

Time and again her thoughts returned to the little vase. Twice she took it from the fold of her girdle, looked at it. She had taken it out for the third time when, outside the door, she heard footsteps, voices, and she tried to slip the vase back. But her nail caught in the thin fabric; a seam ripped. She realized that she could not return the vase to its hiding-place, and, dimly sensing that she did not want whoever entered to find the thing in her hand, she looked round for a place in which to conceal it—the safe! It was open. Rapidly she stepped up to it and pushed the vase into the farthest corner among a lot of papers.

She had already straightened up when the door opened and Pailloux and the house detective entered.

"Well?" asked Marie. "What did you find out?"

Pailloux smiled.

"We found that you were mistaken. No murder has been committed."

"But—Liu Po-Yat—I saw her——"

"Doubtless a hallucination, Miss Campbell. Mr. De Smett and I"—pointing at the detective—"went to your rooms, and"—he spread eloquent hands—"we found nothing."

"N-nothing?" Marie stammered.

"A hallucination." Pailloux smiled. "Perhaps—pardon—a little too much champagne?"

"Too much champagne—my eye!" cried Marie. "You are crazy, both of you!"

"Are we?" asked the detective. He turned to the manager. "Perhaps Miss Campbell would prefer to see with her own eyes?"

"I'll say I do!" affirmed Marie.

"Very well."

And, followed by De Smett, Pailloux led the way to her suite.

"Look!" he said, as they entered.

Marie looked, looked again, doubting, for a moment, her sanity. No body was there, no blood spots, no signs of struggle, of murder. She went into her bedroom and glanced at the dressing-table. The jewel-box was in its old place, unopened.

No doubt, she said to herself, the manager himself, with the help of the detective and most likely other employees, had utilized the half-hour she spent in the office to remove the body and all traces of the tragedy and straighten the rooms. They had done it for a reason. What was it?

Very quickly, and as rationally as she could, she gathered her straying thoughts. By to-morrow her father would have replied to her cable. That would give her some sort of clue to the mystery. Until then she would have to make the best of a bad situation. So she smiled at the two men.

"Gentlemen," she said, "I apologize. I must have had a drop too much champagne. Shocking, don't you think?"

Pailloux coughed.

"Miss Campbell," he began, "I would—I regret—but——"

"What? Come through!"

"You are——"

"Under arrest!" The detective completed the other's sentence and took a step in the girl's direction. She stood her ground.

"Why," she said, "this time it's you who must have had a drop too much to drink! Arrest me—*me*—you said?"

"Yes."

"But I thought you said no murder has been committed?"

"There hasn't," said the detective.

"What's my crime, then?"

"Crime?" Pailloux shrugged distressed shoulders. "Hardly a crime—at least——"

"At least?"

"If you prefer to make immediate restitution, Miss Campbell——"

"Restitution of what, may I inquire?"

"Of a little Chinese vase. A bit of Tchou-fou-yao porcelain," smiled the manager. "Come, Miss Campbell! You are accused of—pardon—not stealing it—no, no——"

"Nothing as crude as that, eh?"

"Of course not! But perhaps you saw the little vase, liked it too much, eh?"

"You'd better give it back," growled the detective.

"Oh!" She drew in her breath. Here was the vase again. She had hidden it in the safe. Doubtless it was this tiny piece of porcelain which the murderer had come to steal, which the Manchu woman had protected with her life, not knowing that her mistress had taken it along. D'Acosta wanted the vase. So did Sun Yu-Wen. And her father— She remembered his words.

"Monsieur Pailloux," she said, "I don't know what you are talking about."

"Miss Campbell," now implored the man, "I beg of you—you put me into a very awkward situation——"

"Not half so awkward as the situation you are putting *me* in!"

"I am helpless. The person who accuses you——"

"Who is that person?"

"You will be told at the police station—in jail!" cried the detective roughly.

"Oh—jail, is it?"

"Please," said Pailloux, "do not force me to go that far. Give up the vase——"

"I haven't got it!"

"But——"

"The police station—right-o!" she continued. "Heavens—what would the New York society editors say if they knew?"

"Miss Campbell," cried the manager, "you are frivolous!"

"And you talk exactly like my father!"

"You will be searched at the station—and if they find the vase——"

"Miss Campbell," cut in the detective, "I want to warn you that everything you say——"

"Will be used against me?" She laughed. "How gorgeously like home, sweet home! America—ah—that reminds me—I want you to notify the American consul at once, Monsieur Pailloux."

"Can't be done!" De Smett interrupted quickly.

"Is *going* to be done!" said the girl. She turned to the manager. "I'll come along without a fuss if you telephone the American consul right now, in my presence, or let me ring him up myself. If you refuse——"

"Well," asked the detective, "what would happen? Going to hit me over the wrist with the fringe of your shawl?"

"Don't forget—we are bound to pass through the hotel lobby. And I give you warning. I went to Vassar, misspent two years there—so the dean told me. But I was cheer-leader at our basket-ball matches. And, when it comes to shouting, why—to quote my favorite black-face Broadway comedian—you haven't heard nothing yet."

The two men looked at each other silently, questioningly.

"Do I win?" asked the girl.

"You do!" growled the detective.

"Good! I'll ring up the consul."

"Let me do it," said the manager.

"All right, my dear Gastong!" laughed the girl. "Politeness first in a Frenchman—eh?—even when he is as crooked as a bull-pup's tail!"

The manager winced, was going to say something, thought better of it, and unhooked the telephone receiver while Marie stood over him, telling him word for word what to say:

"Hello? Mr. Coburn? Pailloux talking. A young American girl has been arrested. . . . A Miss Campbell. . . . Theft. She wants you to come to the jail. . . . In an hour? All right!" He slammed the receiver back.

FIVE minutes later the girl, sitting between the two men, was driving through the Shameen, out of it, and into the native quarter.

In ten minutes the carriage stopped in front of a tall, imposing structure, with, above its broad entranceway, an ornate Chinese sign in scarlet and gold flanked by a smaller one which read in English:

SOUTHERN CHINESE REPUBLIC
Headquarters of Canton Metropolitan Police

"Here we are," said Pailloux. "And—Miss Campbell—I give you one more chance—if you want to give up the vase——"

" 'Lead on, Macduff!' " she quoted frivolously. And, with a laugh, she preceded the two men into the building.

IN THE room she entered were half a dozen desks along the walls, behind which sat pompous Cantonese captains of police as well as a few Europeans, attended by orderlies, and, at the farther end, on a platform, a red-faced Englishman was presiding, flanked by two Tatars in black gowns and strange head-dresses. Afterward Marie found out that it was a police headquarters and court of law combined and that, presided over by the red-faced Englishman, and in deference to the turbulent times with revolution and counter-revolution rife on every side, justice was being given here day and night.

But Marie's joy at the thought that here people spoke English and that a number of the officials were Europeans was short-lived. For while Pailloux and De Smett had stepped forward to register their complaint, a friendly Liverpool sailor who, as he explained to her, had come here as a witness to help a Chinese pal out of trouble, told her in answer to her question that, ever since the establishment of the Southern republic, all the European riffraff of the treaty ports had found service under the republican administration.

"Rotten bloody swine they are—if ye'll pardon my language," said the sailor. "By the way, lydy, wot are *you* doin' 'ere, if I may arsk?"

"I've been arrested."

"But it's the chinky police station! Yer gotta be judged by the European courts."

"Oh!" Here was news for Marie.

But when she was asked to step in front of the red-faced Englishman, who was the presiding judge and whom Pailloux addressed as "Mr. Winchester," and when she told him that he had no right to try her here, the man only laughed.

"Don't talk to me of rights!" he said. "Might—that's what counts here——"

"Wait till the American consul comes."

"All right," he said; "I'll wait. In the mean time—I do not want to be too severe. I'll dismiss the complaint if you give up the vase."

"I haven't got it."

"Stubborn young baggage, aren't you?"

He spoke in Chinese to one of the orderlies. The latter left, and returned a few seconds later with two elderly, capable-looking Chinese women. The judge spoke to them, then turned to Marie.

"They're going to search you," he said. "Go—and don't make a fuss."

Marie was furious, but submitted without a word. She was led into another room. The searching was thorough, but, of course, the two women found nothing and told the judge so when they had returned to the court-room.

The judge turned a hectic purple.

"Miss Campbell," he said, "I warn you most solemnly. You are in a dangerous situation. Tell me—now—immediately. Here"—quickly thrusting out pencil and paper—"don't tell me; write it down." He dropped his voice to a whisper. "What did you do with the vase?"

"I refuse to answer. You have no right to——"

"Right be blowed! Might—that's what counts; didn't I tell you? Going to own up?"

"No!" Her eyes gleamed. "And I——"

The judge interrupted her.

"Remove the prisoner!" he shouted, and a Chinese orderly rushed up.

"Remove the prisoner—nothing!" she cried, now thoroughly roused. "I don't know what your laws are here, and I don't care! But"—and suddenly all her great, latent nationalism blazed up into white-hot heat—"I am an American. I insist on my rights! And—first of all—I want to know what the charges against me are."

The judge had regained his composure. "A female Saul among the Prophets?" he inquired with irony.

If at that moment she could have cleared up the whole thing, she would not have done so; for it was beginning to become a question of principle with her, national principle as well as personal.

"I insist on my rights," she said. "What are the charges against me? And who preferred them? I tell you again I am an American!"

"Very interesting, I am sure," commented the judge, with a wink in the direction of Pailloux. "But what I say goes." He turned to the orderly. "Remove the prisoner!"

Marie again faced the judge. This time she was speaking very quietly.

"You are an Englishman?"

"What about it?"

"Do you call this British fair play? And you"—turning to Pailloux—"you call yourself a Frenchman! Bah!" She snapped her fingers derisively. "You are renegades—both of you!"

The two men colored. The hotel manager looked at the other man with a helpless expression; he whispered to him. The judge gave a lopsided smile.

"Very well, Miss Campbell," he said; "I shall tell you since you are so insistent. You are under arrest because you are accused of having purloined a certain vase——"

"I know!" she cut in impatiently. "I want you to tell me who——"

"You are furthermore under arrest," continued the judge, "for a much graver reason."

"What?"

"You are suspected of being an enemy of the Southern Chinese Republic, of having conspired with the republic's foes to bring about its downfall."

MOMENTARILY the girl was frightened. But almost immediately she regained her composure.

"I beg your pardon," she said courteously. "But, once more—have I the right to know who preferred these charges against me?"

"Well—just to oblige you—I shall tell you. The charges are brought against you by three people. They are myself, as presiding judge and chief of the Southern Chinese intelligence service, Monsieur Pailloux, and"—he leaned across his desk—"by the *Chuen to yan* of the Temple of the Protecting Deities."

He stopped, staring at her closely, evidently eager to see what impression the information had made on her. Marie was silent for a few moments. Two thoughts were in her mind. One had to do with the words: "*Chuen to yan.*" They were the same words which the Manchu woman had used just before she died, when Marie had asked her who had attacked her. What did the words signify? Well, she would ask Mr. Coburn, the American consul; he would be here within the hour. Her other thought dealt with the temple of which Winchester had spoken. She knew it. It was the temple of Canton's guardian saints, though foreigners preferred calling it the "Temple of Horrors." On either side of the entrance-gate and farther up the walls were life-sized wood and stone figures representing people undergoing the tortures inflicted in the ten kingdoms of the Buddhistic hell. There were some being bored through the middle, sawn between two boards, precipitated upon turned-up swords, boiled in oil, crushed by the slow descent of a red-hot bronze bell. The Temple of Horrors! The Tchou-fou-yao porcelain! And what had she to do with it all? What——

She would own up that it all meant nothing to her—nothing, that she had put the little vase in the hotel safe, that she was just a headstrong, adventurous American girl who had had her fill of adventures and thrills and wanted to go home by the next steamer to the sane life, the safe and sure. She turned to the judge.

Then again, suddenly, she felt a riot of strange sensations surging in her soul and heart. Again she had an impression of half-forgotten things, a gauze-veiled memory of something she had lived through.

All right; there was the American consul; there was her father at the other end of the cable; there was, lastly, the "friend" to whom the dying Manchu woman had referred. Not Moses d'Acosta or Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen. A third! Perhaps—she wondered—Prince Pavel Kokoshkine, the Russian exile in the service of the Southern Chinese Republic, who had invited her to dine with him the next evening!

"Well?" asked Mr. Winchester. "What is the answer?"

"The answer is that I'll go to jail," replied Marie Campbell.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the judge, with something like admiration in his accents. "I must admit that at least when it comes to nerve, you are a Simon-pure American!"

"You'll find out more about that when the consul gets here."

"Doubtless! Doubtless!" He smiled.

He turned again to the orderly, with quick instructions in Chinese. The orderly spoke to Marie.

"Coming, missy?" he asked.

"Right-o, old dear!" said the girl, and followed him.

THE prison cell turned out to be not a prison cell at all but a fair-sized and comfortable-enough room with two large iron-grilled windows, a door that was open, a couch, and a few rocking-chairs which spoke eloquently and nostalgically of Grand Rapids, Michigan, U. S. A. She touched their golden-oak wood tenderly.

"If anybody had ever told me, in the days when I went in for early-Colonial furniture, that Grand Rapids would make me feel sentimental, I would have called him a liar!" she said out loud, very much to the surprise of an East Indian who was hovering round the door, evidently the jailer.

He was a brown-faced, agate-eyed *baboo*, very fat and oily, and clad in white gauze, which, considering his fantastic bodily contours, gave him a grotesque appearance.

Twice she talked to him. But each time he shook his head.

"Against regulation number fifteen, paragraph three, to talk to prisoners suspected of political crimes. Yes-s-s, *memsahib!*"

Marie laughed.

"How I adore being addressed as '*memsahib*'! Really—it thrills me so! It makes me feel no end Kipling!"

But it made no impression on the man. He continued to stare at her silently with that passionless gaze of the Indo-Aryan to whom eternities are only a vulgar matter of a yawn and a stretch, and to whom excitement and interest in worldly subjects are merely the ungentlemanly and unintelligible pastimes of crude Western barbarians. Minutes moved on in a sullen, maddening procession. Only once was the silence interrupted, savagely, by a scream, then an outburst of elaborate quarter-deck profanity. She was walking up and down at the time. When she heard the noise, she stopped near the door and looked out, while the *baboo*, who had turned to see whence the row came, had his back to her. Across the corridor, not very far away, she saw another room with the door open, and inside, being cross-examined by two bullying Chinese officials, the Liverpool sailor who had befriended her in the court-room.

"You will stay here until you confess to whom you delivered the guns," said one of the officials.

Again the sailor broke into whole-hearted profanity, winding up with:

"Just yer wyte till I gets out o' 'ere, yer plurry, rotten chink yer! I'll"—he choked with rage—"aw—the things wot I'm goin' to do to yer—wot ho—it'll be a bleedin' shyme! Just wyte!"

"Bravo!" cried Marie. "Hello there, companion in misery! Three cheers!"

But immediately the door to the sailor's room was shut from the inside, while the *baboo* turned to her.

"*Memsahib,*" he implored, "it is against the regulations——"

"All right, Booker T.!" interrupted the girl. "Don't get excited."

She sat down. A dozen thoughts whirled in her brain. If she could only decipher the clipping from the *North China Gazette* which Mr. d'Acosta had given to her! She opened her purse, looked at it. It was useless. And all the time the *baboo* stared at her, without uttering a single word and with an air of worldly detachment which finally got on her nerves.

"Look here, you piece of coffee-éclair fraud!" she cried at last, thoroughly annoyed. "Say something, or I'll throw this chair at you!"

The *baboo* stared at her.

"*Memsahib,*" he replied, with the precise and unhuman deliberation of a phonograph, "speaking in my strictly official capacity, I beg to point out to you that it is against the law of the Southern Chinese Republic to throw chairs or other hard substances at the heads of members of the judiciary. Please, *memsahib*, be so kind as not to throw the chair!"

Marie burst into laughter.

"Booker T.," she said irreverently, "you get the prize! I herewith endow you with the brown-velvet derby hat and the india-rubber doughnut! As a George Ade, you are a perfect dumb-bell!"

After which decidedly slangy and unladylike remarks she decided that she was tired. She closed her eyes, falling into easy sleep. It did not seem more than ten minutes when she was called by the *baboo's* falsetto voice.

"Be pleased to awaken, *memsahib*. The American consul has arrived."

She sat up straight.

"The American consul!" she cried. "Show him to me, my lad!"

But when, shortly afterward, Mr. Tecumseh Coburn, a tall young man with a high nose, a Virginian drawl and a super-Virginian manner, came in, bowed to her, and waved the *baboo* outside with a courtly but dragooning gesture and sat down across from her, her joy was destined to be short-lived.

"Miss Campbell," he said, "I am afraid you are in a very awkward situation."

"Right-o! That's where you come in."

"I—but——"

"Don't I—I mean my father—pay most exorbitant taxes? Didn't I—again I mean my father—vote for the party which put you into your consular swivel chair?"

"That's exactly it!" said Mr. Coburn. "*Did* your father vote?"

"I believe that he——"

"Or could he have voted if he had wanted to, Miss Campbell?"

"I don't understand."

"When I heard that they brought you here instead of to the consular court in the Shameen, I became very indignant. I went straight to the Chinese civilian governor and I registered a kick. But that bland Mongol assured me by all his household divinities and proved it to me—yes; proved it to me, for he had cabled to Washington for the official information—that your father never became naturalized, that therefore you had no right to appeal to the American consul."

"Mr. Coburn," maintained the girl stoutly, "I am an American—every bit of me!"

"Yes," he said; "you are. In feeling and"—he smiled—"in looks. In pluck. In resourcefulness. But—nationally—legally—I am so sorry——"

"All right," she replied. "The British consul, then."

"I thought of that. I talked to him. And—" He coughed, was silent.

"Yes?"

"We went back to the Chinese governor together. Mr. Winchester, the judge of this court, was already there."

"What happened?"

"The Chinese authorities produced proof that you are a Chinese subject."

"With the name of Campbell?" she mocked. "I know that I was born in China, but——"

"They proved that, according to an old law not yet abolished by the republic and reaching far back to the days of Tatar dominion, the children of Tatars and kindred Central-Asian races, on both the father's and the mother's side, are Chinese subjects."

"My father is Scotch!"

"What about your mother? Perhaps she— Certainly you ought to know——"

"I ought to know!" cried the girl. "Oh, yes—you are quite right—I ought to know. But——"

SHE was silent, staring straight ahead of her; she felt utterly alone as suddenly through the mists of her apprehension floated down the full realization of the fact that her father had never taken her into his confidence as to her mother, who and what she had been. Mystery, intrigue, tragedy were on every side of her. Her father must have sensed something of the sort, or he wouldn't have made that allusion to the little Chinese vase. Why, then, had he let her go without telling her the full tale? Her glance crossed the man's, and he took her right hand in his.

"I wish I could help you more," he said. "But—don't you see? I am the American consul, and this is a political case of a foreign government against one of its own subjects. There is diplomatic etiquette—my consular oath. In fact, before the Chinese officials allowed me to see you alone, I had to assure them that——"

"I understand, Mr. Coburn."

"Don't give up the ship, though! I don't know exactly why you are here in this predicament. But I was given to understand by the Chinese officials and by Judge Winchester that you can get out of it simply enough by telling them something—I don't know what—which they seem keen on knowing. It must be political, or they wouldn't be so excited, so upset——"

"Are they really? I am glad of it."

"Why, Miss Campbell?"

"Vindictiveness, revenge! That's the Scotch of me! I don't like Mr. Winchester or Pailloux or all the rest."

"Never mind that. Tell them what they want to know and they'll release you at once. They are even willing to pay your passage home. What do you say?"

"I say, 'No!' "

"But—listen——"

"I am grateful to you, Mr. Coburn. But—" She hesitated. She thought of the murdered Manchu woman, of Pailloux's and De Smett's flagrant duplicity, of Winchester's pompous brutality. She was indignant at these people's lack of fair play, and she made up her mind that she would hurt them, even if it were dangerous for herself. They were after the vase for some grave and vital reason. She would not tell them where she had hidden it, or would they dream of searching Pailloux's private safe for it. "Mr. Coburn," she continued, "all this is something to me."

"What?"

"A matter of principle."

"Principle?"

"You are a Virginian, aren't you?"

"I plead guilty, m'lady."

"And, as a Virginian, aren't there certain principles you respect—deep down in your heart—even though the rest of the world may deem them foolish and quixotic and self-hurting?"

"I reckon that's right."

"Very well. I am the same way. And one of my principles is that I will not quit under fire."

"Bravo!" he cried. "I adore your delicious folly. If I weren't a married man——"

"I am sorry you are," she smiled, "but so glad for the sake of your wife." She was serious again. "Listen——"

"Yes?"

Should she tell him about the murdered Manchu woman? The next moment she decided that she would not. The consul, too, would say that it must have been a case of too much champagne. But she told Mr. Coburn she had cabled her father.

"Oh!" he said. "You cabled?"

"Yes." And, as he looked at her, shaking his head, "What is the matter?"

"I told you martial law has been proclaimed. All cables pass through the censor's hands."

"Oh! You think that my cable——"

"Was most likely never ticked off at all."

"Mr. Coburn," she said, "won't you——"

"Please!" he interrupted. "I know what you want me to do, but I can't. If I send a cable to your father in my private capacity, the censor will stop it, just as he stopped yours. As to my official capacity, I explained to you——"

"Yes. Your oath of office—the very ticklish political situation, and"—bitterly—"it seems that I am not an American citizen—legally. Oh, it isn't fair!"

"I am so sorry. I do wish there was something I could do to help you——"

"You can. I want to know something about Mr. Moses d'Acosta and Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen. Do you know them?"

"Who doesn't?"

"Are they influential in Canton?"

"Yes—and no. The local officials do not like them, in fact, hate them, would like to see them dead and buried——"

"Then," asked Marie, "seeing how unscrupulous these Southern Chinese officials are, why don't they cause them to disappear?"

"That's where the rub comes in. D'Acosta and Sun Yu-Wen are *too* rich, *too* influential. If anything happened to them—why—heaven alone knows what might come of it. You see, where two are concerned, the Southern republic is really between the devil and the deep blue sea."

"Good enough! What do you know about Prince Pavel Kokoshkine?"

"What all the world knows—that he is a Russian—an aristocrat—a gentleman—and a former officer in the czar's army. He puzzles me. He is an imperialist—an aristocrat—and yet here he is in the service of these Southern radicals. It's beyond me."

"Where does he live?"

"On the other side of the river, not far from Nan-Hai prison, on the corner of the street of the Leaning Plum Tree."

"Thank you."

THE consul rose to go, but Marie put her hand on his arm.

"One second," she begged. "There's a British sailor across the landing. He is in trouble, too."

"Oh—Tommy Higginson?"

"You know him?"

The consul laughed.

"We all do in Canton. Trouble—and serves him right. It seems that he has been doing a little private gun-running, and so he has put himself outside the consular jurisdiction and protection. It looks black for him."

"You can't help him out, can you?"

"Neither I nor my British colleague."

"But," said Marie, "is there a reason in the world why you can't give him—let's say—a few cigarettes, just for the sake of humanity?"

"I reckon I can."

"And—is there any reason why you can't give him some of *my* cigarettes? Finally, is there any reason why, being a Virginia gentleman, you can't turn your back on a lady for a few minutes when she asks you nicely—and although you are the consul, and under consular oath?"

He looked at her significantly; then he laughed.

"Very well," he said, and turned his face to the wall.

She opened her hand-bag and took out a package of Bostanioglo cigarettes she had bought that morning. Rapidly she scribbled a few words on the inside of the box, closed it again and handed it to the consul.

"Here you are," she said. "Give it to Mr. Higginson. Tell him the cigarettes are from me. Tell him they are good cigarettes, that they were made in dear old London. Tell him, furthermore, that the advertisement on the inside cover of the box may make him think of home. You understand?"

The consul smiled.

"I think I heard the scratch of a pencil."

"Forget it, please!"

"I will. Good-night, Miss Campbell!"

"Good-night, Mr. Coburn! And thanks!"

THE consul left and, a few seconds later, the *baboo* returned.

"Booker T.," Marie said, "I am going to take a little nap—on that chair there. So would you mind remaining outside?"

"*Memsahib*, I regret very much, but it is against——"

"I get you, old dear! On the other hand, consider my feminine prejudices and inhibitions. Consider your own sense of delicacy——"

"But——"

"Don't be a little chocolate-éclair-colored jackass! See—I'll curl up on that rocking-chair—and"—suiting the action to her words—"I'll put it right near the door. You can stay just beyond the threshold, where you can look at me any time you want to. I am tired, very tired, but I know I couldn't sleep if you stay here in the room. Aren't you armed with that big revolver of yours?"

"But——"

"Please!"

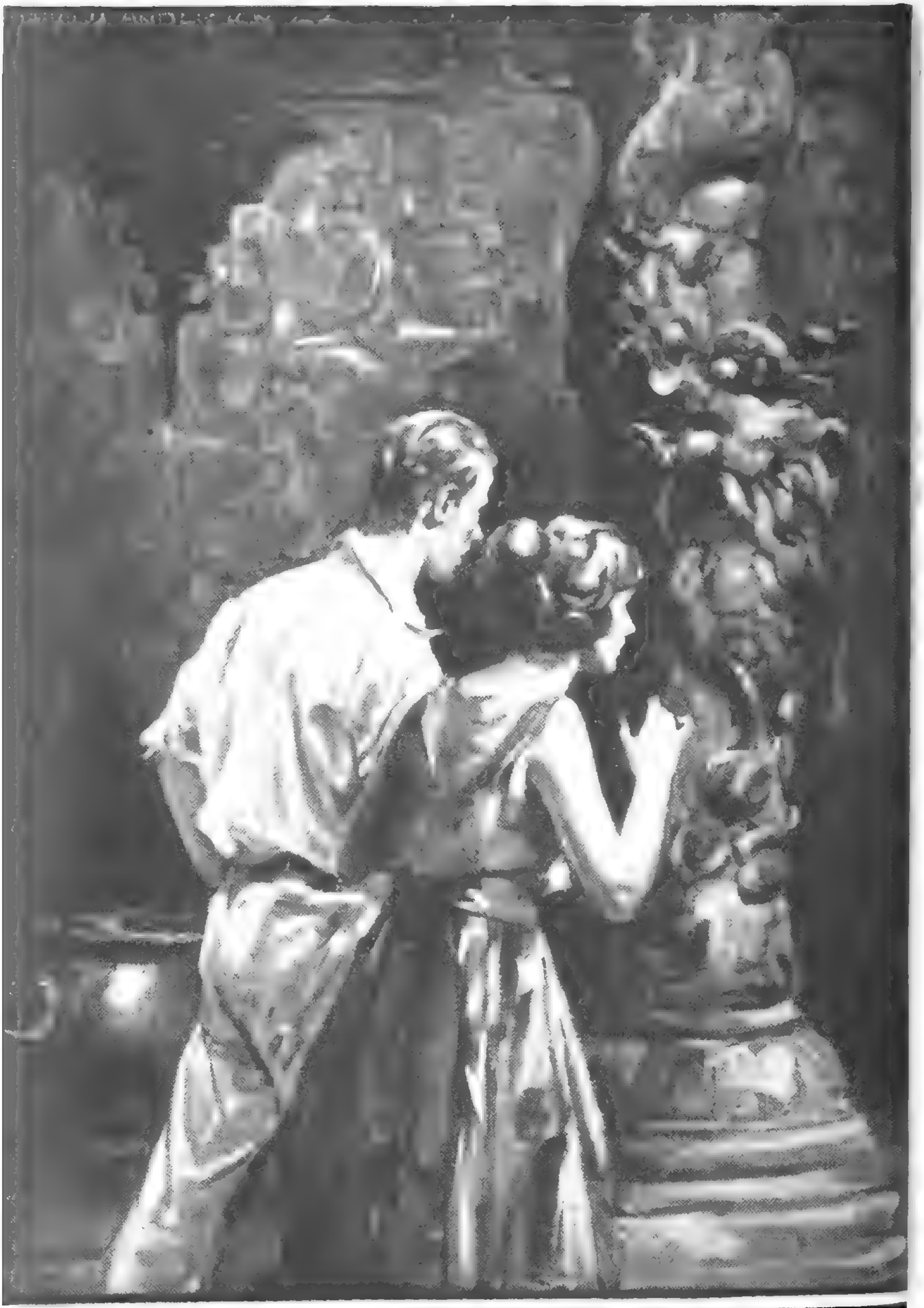
She gave him a brilliant smile, and—thought Marie—at last he showed certain signs of strictly male humanity. He bowed.

"Yes-s-s, *memsahib*," he replied, and he took his place beyond the threshold while she sat on the chair near the door, imitating a moment later the deep breathing of an exhausted sleeper, but watching carefully from beneath lowered eyelids and listening to whatever might happen on the landing.

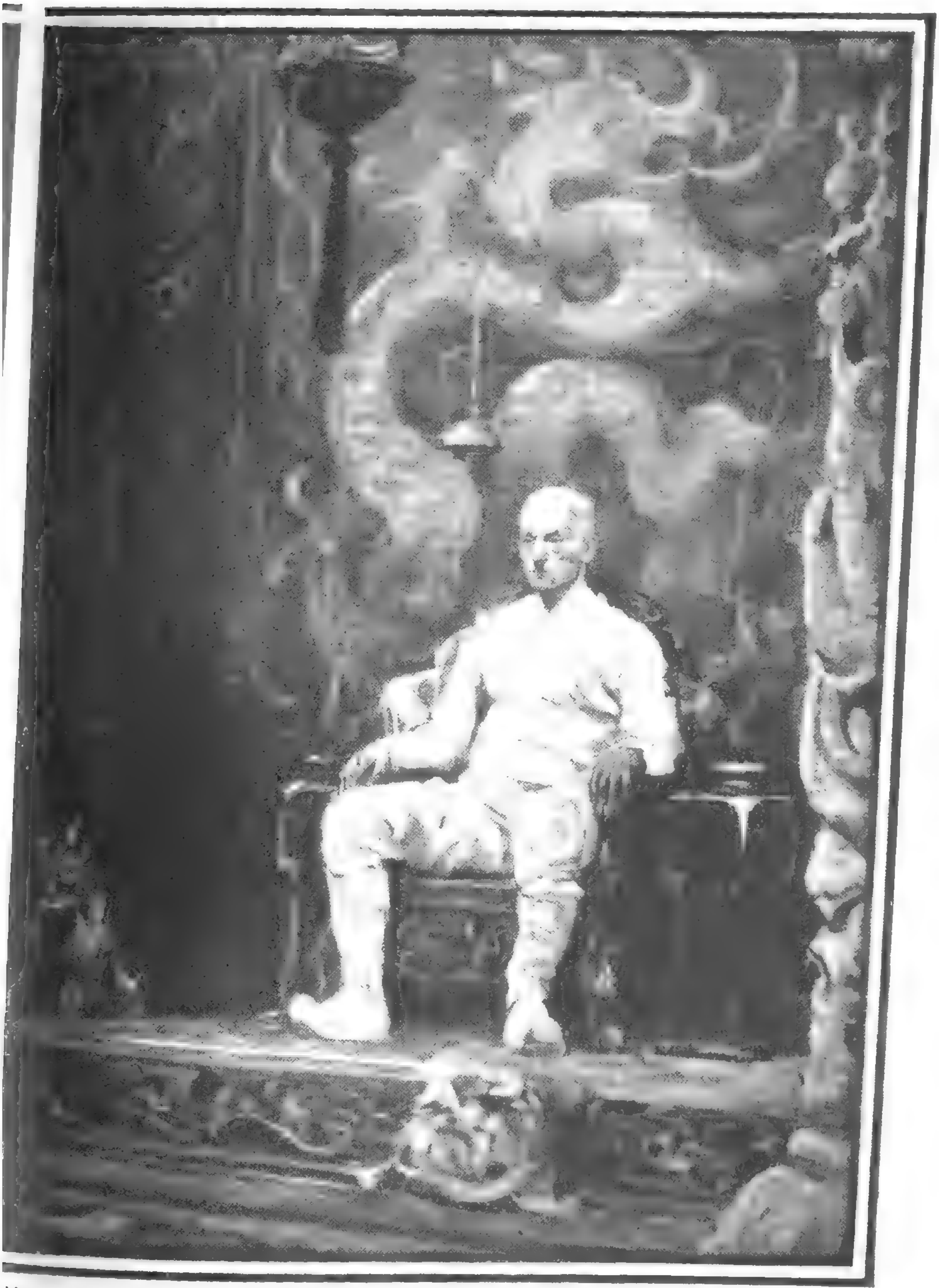
There was silence—swathing, leaden, unbroken, except occasionally by the creaking noise of a sentinel outside grounding his rifle or the click-clank-click of a metal scabbard-tip being dragged against the stone pavement as the officers of the night watch went on their rounds.

Marie glanced across her shoulder at the iron-grilled windows. It was still night, heavy, deep violet, with a froth of stars tossed over the crest of the heavens.

She looked at her wrist-watch. Two o'clock in the morning, she could tell, by the rays of the single electric bulb on the landing. She felt despair creeping over her soul, and, pluckily, she decided to fight it back. So she began to marshal her thoughts as logically and constructively as she could. By this time she had completely dismissed any idea of coming to terms with Judge Winchester and Pailloux and whatever political party and influence they represented. These men were intriguing, unscrupulous, thoroughly evil. But what about Moses d'Acosta, the masterful, idealistic Turkish Jew, and about Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen? How did they come into the focus of this dark-coiling adventure? It seemed that they were both dangerous enemies of the Southern radicals—thus, logically, both working for the same end. Too, they seemed to have genuine liking and sympathy for each other. Yet, she remembered, there had been that undercurrent between them as if, somehow, they were opposed one against the other; and both had been anxious about that little Chinese vase which had been the real root of her troubles—which had begun with an overdue hotel bill and had wound up with her here in a political prison. Then there was Prince Pavel Kokoshkine's enigmatic figure, and the *Chuen to yan* of the Temple of Horrors,



Side by side with Higginson, Marie took a few steps forward, slowly and deliberately, until she was the sailor, with hysterical, forced gaiety. "I



ithin a few feet of the face. And then, all at once, it lost its stark immobility. "Wot ho!" cried
ought as yer were a bleedin' mummy, me lad!"

Everybody's Magazine, July, 1922

whom the murdered Manchu woman had mentioned with her dying breath. What did "*Chuen to yan*" mean? Why hadn't she thought of asking the American consul? She was quite angry with herself.

Try as she might, she was not able to fit the pieces of the puzzle into a reasonable whole. There was a missing link, and it consisted in her own relation to this mystery—her own and her mother's. So once more her thoughts returned to the latter. She must have been a Chinese subject, Tatar or Central Asian, but whatever her race and blood, she must have been important during life, even from beyond death. Marie speculated and wondered. What and who were her mother's people? There was that uncle of hers, dead, murdered— Who, what had he been? How had he been connected with it all? Quite clearly she recalled d'Acosta's words:

"Shall we call him your uncle? Or shall we call him Mr. Mavropoulos? Or shall we go straight back into ancient history and call him—ah—what is the old Tatar title he loved so? The Ssu Yueh?"

Mavropoulos! It sounded to her like a Greek name. How could she be connected with it?

"My word!" she thought. "What a mess!"

She stretched her cramped limbs a little and yawned. But the next moment she imitated again a sleeper's deep breathing as she heard Judge Winchester's pinchbeck Lancashire accents in the corridor:

"All right, Pailloux. We shall see what the man wants."

THE door being open at a convenient angle and the *baboo's* back not obstructing her vision, she saw the two men coming along the corridor, saw them, through a minutely raised eyelid, stop at the door of her room and peer in.

"By Jove!" whispered Winchester. "Fast asleep! Has nerve—that girl!"

Then they crossed and entered the room where Higginson was imprisoned.

She heard the judge's first words:

"You asked for me?"

"Yes, yer 'Onor," replied the sailor.

"I suppose you have decided to make a clean breast of it, my man."

"Well, yer 'Onor, I got some valuable information for yer. For a price——"

"Name it!"

"I want yer to release me."

"I'll see what can be done. First, the information. About the gun-running, eh?"

"To 'ell with them blanked guns!" came the reply in the picaresque diction of the London docks. "It's something different—and a bleedin' sight more important, cully!"

"Oh!" countered the judge. "For instance——"

Marie sucked in her breath. It was now evident to her that the sailor had read and understood the message which she had scribbled on the inside of the cigarette-box.

"Yes, yer 'Onor!" said the man. "It's about a vase—funny nyme—'eathenish and chinky——"

"Sssh!" interrupted Winchester.

"Sssh!" echoed Pailloux.

They stepped into the sailor's room and closed the door from the inside, and again there was silence, while Marie waited, excited, expectant. The message she had written on the inside cover of the box had of necessity been short. But she relied on the sailor's shrewd cockney sense to supply the missing links, all the more that she had learned from the consul that the man was in real danger and would grasp at the proverbial straw to save his neck. She glanced in the direction of the window. She did not want morning to come before she had her chance. It was still dark enough outside, with just the faintest sign of morning blazing its purple message. Ten minutes she waited, fifteen, twenty, and the purple morning light increased in vividness; it took on a slight tinge of gold and deep red.

"Dear God, help me!"—prayers of her childhood, long forgotten, rose to her lips.

She waited another five minutes, and then the door of the sailor's room opened and, from beneath lowered eyelids, she saw Winchester and Pailloux on the threshold, and between them Higginson, who was gesticulating for dear life.

"Stroike me pink," he exclaimed, "if I ain't tellin' yer Gawd's truth!"

"I do not believe you," said Pailloux.

"Listen!" continued Higginson. "Call me a sanguinary organ-grinder's ring-tailed monkey if I'm lyin' to yer two gents! I tell yer I seen that 'ere vase——"

"*Nom d'un nom d'un nom!*" interrupted the hotel manager. "Do not name it! Call it 'the thing!' We told you before that it is dangerous to mention it by name, that nobody, except the judge and me and perhaps three or four important Chinese officials, know of the thing's existence."

"Wot ho! Wot bloody ho!" cried the sailor triumphantly, while Marie blessed his ready mother-wit. "If nobody except yerselves and mebbe 'arf a dozen toffs knows about this 'ere bloomin'—now—thing, then 'ow, in the nyme of me sainted grandaunt Priscilla, can *I* know about this 'ere syme—now—thing, eh? Don't yer see that I'm givin' it to yer straight?"

"Logical!" suddenly exclaimed the Frenchman. "Absolutely logical!"

"Now ye're talkin', Mister Whiskerando!" said the sailor. "It's the truth, don't yer see?"

"By Jupiter!" admitted Winchester. "I am beginning to believe it myself!"

"Truthful 'Arry—that's wot me mytes calls me aboard ship!" cut in Mr. Higginson in a splendid outburst of seafaring imagination.

Winchester took Pailloux to one side and whispered to him earnestly. Then he approached the sailor once more.

"My man," he said, "we have decided that you are speaking the truth. You could not possibly know about the existence of the—ah—thing unless—well—unless you knew. And you described the thing correctly. You know its name. Very well. We shall give you the chance you ask for."

"All I wants is ten minutes alone with the lydy," said the sailor. "I'll myke 'er 'fess up, or me nyme ain't Truthful 'Arry 'Igginson, gents! I knows wot to say to 'er! I—" again his imagination surged up riotously and magnificently—"I knows a few things about 'er that'd myke yer 'air turn gray. Let me tell you, gents——"

"Some other time. We are in a hurry to put our hands on the thing."

"Right-o! Ten minutes with 'er, mebbe fifteen. Alone. That's all I arsk."

"Alone?" objected Monsieur Pailloux. "But——"

"I got to talk to her gentle-like first. She won't spill unless I gets 'er confidence first—and we got to be alone for that."

"Still, I don't see—" said the Frenchman.

"We'll leave the *baboo* in the room. Oh, yes"—as Higginson was about to expostulate—"got to be done!" He called to the *baboo*. "Hey, there, Hurree Chuckerjee!"

The latter approached and salaamed.

"Yes, *sahib?*"

"Armed, aren't you?"

"Yes, *sahib.*"

"Mr. Higginson is going to talk to Miss Campbell for a few minutes, and you'll stay in the room with them."

"But—yer 'Onor—" interjected the sailor.

"You can talk to her in a whisper, Higginson. And it's up to you to watch, Hurree Chuckerjee—understand?"

"Listen is obey, *sahib!*"

"It's all right," Winchester said to Pailloux. "The windows of the room are barred with iron, and there are sentinels in the street."

"Very well," said Higginson. "I'll talk to 'er. And then, if I'm right and I myke the lydy 'fess up, all ye've got to do is look for the—now—thing after she owns up—and, gents, she'll own up soon enough! And then, after ye've found it, ye'll squash that there gun-runnin' indictment against me and let me go back to me ship—and wot ho for the briny and Liverpool and the barmaids of the Old Crocodile!"

"Agreed!" said Mr. Winchester.

A MINUTE later, Marie Campbell simulated surprise and indignation when the *baboo* took her by the arm, calling, "Ho, *memsahib!*" and when immediately afterward Winchester, flanked by Higginson and the Frenchman, walked up to her and told her, with a thin laugh, that he wanted "this person, Mr. Higginson, able-bodied seaman," to have a few minutes' private conversation with her.

"I don't know Mr.—oh—" she cried, "whatever his name!"

"Aw—lydy," cut in the sailor, with every appearance of hurt feelings, "don't yer remember Truthful 'Arry?" He appealed to the judge. "That's gratitude, yer 'Onor! After it was me who 'elped 'er to——"

Marie cut in rapidly, afraid the sailor's imagination might defeat its own ends.

"I don't know you," she repeated.

"Don't you?" smiled the judge.

"But, Miss Campbell," exclaimed Higginson, winking a watery blue eye at her, "don't yer recall as 'ow yer told me only larst week——"

"I don't remember a thing!"

"You will remember—presently," said Judge Winchester. He turned to the sailor.

"Higginson," he said, "come straight to my private office when you are through with Miss Campbell. Know where it is, don't you?" He smiled disagreeably.

"Yes, yer 'Onor. It's the third door beyond the turning of the corridor, ain't it?"

"*Mon Dieu*, no!" exclaimed the Frenchman.

"Indeed, no!" echoed Mr. Winchester. "It's the fourth door. Be careful! I shall instruct the guards to let you pass."

"Thanks, yer 'Onor," said the sailor, pulling at his forelock. The two men walked away, while Hurree Chuckerjee and Higginson stepped fully into the room, closing the door, the former remaining near the threshold and playing nervously with the butt of his revolver while the latter walked up to Marie.

"Now, lydy," he said in a loud voice, "I 'ad a long talk with the judge, and I promised 'im I would myke yer 'fess up. Now—come through!"

"I don't know you!"

"Aw, 'ow yer 'urts my feelings!"

"Leave me alone!"

"Look a-'ere!" Higginson sat down close to Marie and dropped his voice to a whisper. "Wot ho, but ye're a bloomin' good actress!"

"Am I not?" Marie whispered back.

"Right-o! I got yer note, lydy—and now—wot are we goin' to do with it—as the monkey sed when 'e 'ad grabbed the red-'ot poker?"

SO THEY conversed in low, tense accents for several minutes, while Mr. Hurree Chuckerjee looked on, wild-eyed, staring, all the nerves in his cowardly *baboo* body writhing as he saw the powerful play of the back muscles beneath the sailor's thin shirt. He touched the sacred wool thread of his caste that circled his obese waist, and he prayed silently but fervently to an assortment of his favorite Hindu deities. For he knew these rough seafaring *sahibs*, and he did not trust them—no—not at all. Which proved that he had more than a little common sense as well as, evidently, more than a little experience on docks and water-fronts in the days before he left Calcutta for a life of adventure in yellow China.

But, after all, it appeared that Mr. Hurree Chuckerjee's fears had been groundless. For just at that moment Higginson turned away from the girl and walked up to him, a sunny smile in his watery blue eyes and a laugh on his lips.

"Mister 'Indu," he said, "it's done!"

"Yes-s-s, *sahib?*"

"Right-o! The little lydy 'as decided to jolly well spill the truth. 'Aven't you, Miss Campbell?"

"Oh, yes," she said demurely.

"And now for me interview with the judge," the sailor went on as he crossed to the threshold. "The third door, eh, Mr. 'Indu?"

"No!" cried the latter, waving pudgy, excited hands. "The fourth! The judge warned you most especially, Higginson *sahib!*"

"That's so," admitted the able-bodied seaman. "Forgetful 'Arry—that's wot me shipmytes calls me, when they don't call me Truthful 'Arry."

"You must not make a mistake about the door!" implored the *baboo*.

"I 'opes as I won't. Wot's be'ind that other door, cully, that ye're all so bloody well frightened about it?"

"Nothing, *sahib*."

"Right-o! Secret diplomacy—wot?"

"You must be careful," repeated the *baboo*. "Perhaps I had better come with you part of the way—until you meet the guards?"

"I do think you 'ad better. Although"—the sailor hesitated—"are you allowed to leave this 'ere lydy alone?"

'It is against regulation fifteen, paragraph eight. But, *sahib*, the windows are barred and I shall lock the door. For the first time in my life I shall therefore not adhere strictly to the printed regulations."

"Yer *are* a broad-minded josser!" came the hearty reply. "Let's go!" And Higginson put his left arm through the *baboo's* right with a friendly smile, and then, the very next moment, before the latter knew what was occurring and how, it seemed to him that an entire firmament filled with a million bright stars was bursting somewhere in the back cells of his brain while a terrible pain shot knifelike through his eyes.

What had really happened was that Higginson had suddenly reverted to the shirt-sleeves diplomacy and tactics of the quarter-deck. With great rapidity he had drawn his left arm from the *baboo's* right, had turned with catlike agility, had thrust his left hand into the *baboo's* eye, his right into his throat, and the man went down as though he had been struck by a high-power bullet.

"Quick! We ain't got much time!"

Higginson turned to the girl, and, with her help, inside of a few seconds they gagged the *baboo* securely with the sailor's handkerchief and the girl's gloves. Working feverishly, they tore the waist-shawl from the unconscious man and, with that and the sailor's coat and belt, tied him hand and foot. Then the sailor helped himself to the *baboo's* revolver and motioned to Marie to follow him.

"If we meet the guards, it'll be all right. The judge told them to let me pass—and that goes for you, too. We only 'ave one chance."

"You mean—that third door beyond the turning they all seem so scared about?"

"Right-o!"—as his hand turned the knob. " 'Ere we go, all aboard for Blackpool! Step out plucky and unconcerned-like."

'I will."

They left the room, quickly closing the door behind them, and a few steps farther down the corridor they met one of the guards, a big, red-faced Tatar in full uniform and heavily armed. Higginson walked up to him casually.

"Did the judge tell you——"

"All light. Top-side plenty good!" came the reply in pidgin-English, and the Tatar soldier kept on his way, unsuspectingly turning his back while the sailor whispered rapidly to the girl:

"Sorry I ain't got no time to fool with Queensberry rules. I got to treat 'im as I did 'is nibs back in yer room. Can't afford to have 'im prowl round——"

Again, with tremendous agility, he turned. Up flashed his right hand which held the revolver, the steel butt hitting the Tatar on the lower part of the brain. The man went down without a sound.

"Got to shyke a leg!" said Higginson to Marie, the light of battle in his blue eyes. "Ain't got no time to tie and gag 'im. Still—that sleepin'-powder I administered to 'is bean will keep 'im in the arms of Murphy for a jolly good while."

"You are such a sweet and peaceful soul, Mr. Higginson!" smiled the girl.

"I am!" maintained the sailor stoutly. "Peaceful 'Arry—that's wot me pals calls me. I'm a bleedin' lamb until some blighter steps on me toes—" He interrupted himself, pointed. "Look! 'Ere's the turning!" They made it at a run, hand in hand. There was no other guard about. "Now, then—" as they stopped in front of the third door.

"Shall we—" breathed Marie, wondering what lay beyond the threshold.

"We bloomin' well got to!" replied the sailor. "It's our only chance, lydy." He touched the door rather gingerly. "Mebbe I was a fool doin' wot yer arsked me in that there note yer wrote on the cigarette-box! Well—never mind. I likes the color of yer eyes. Come; step into me parlor." The door opened easily enough. He peered in. "Gawd—ain't it dark? Well—can't be 'elped. In we pops!"

They crossed the threshold. Groping with his fingers, he found that the door had an automatic latch on the inside. He snapped it shut, then turned away from the door, Marie at his side, both feeling warily with their feet.

"Stairs!" she whispered, her heart beating like a trip-hammer.

"Right-o!"

THEY groped their way down the stairs slowly, carefully, perhaps a couple of dozen steps, worn slippery and hollow as by the tread of hundreds of naked feet, down, straight down. There was not even the faintest ray of light, and the air was heavy, terribly oppressive, stagnant. But they held on their course, carefully setting foot before foot, hands stretched out at right angles from their bodies to give warning of unfamiliar objects, and finally they landed dead against a wall.

"Wot now?" asked Higginson.

"Let's see."

Presently, by groping tentatively here and there, they discovered that they had debouched on a narrow landing which stretched right and left. Which way should they go, they wondered. They had to turn somewhere, and so they chose the left, for no particular reason. But often since Marie speculated what would have happened to them and how the whole adventure would have ended had they gone the other way.

Still they kept on, the sailor in front, Marie following, until suddenly there was a dull noise. Higginson let out an oath.

"Gawd! That hurts!"

It appeared that he had struck his forehead a terrific bump against a low beam that barred the way. He leaned down and investigated.

"There's space beyond. Careful, lydy!"

Bending down, they stepped under the beam and, by feeling, found that they were in a small cubicle, less than five feet in height and no bigger than six or seven feet square. The road seemed to end there. They crouched low, wondering what next to do.

"I'm goin' to strike a match," whispered the sailor.

"You think you'd better?"

"Ain't nothing else to do. Got to."

Up flared the match with a brutal lemon flare, and they looked about quickly. There was no door—nothing, except——

"Look!" said Marie, and pointed at the low ceiling where, square in the center, a curved metal handle was protruding. The match flickered out. "What now?" asked Marie.

"Got to try the 'andle, lydy," said Higginson, with British stoicism.

A jerk and twist—and suddenly half the ceiling slid to one side, into a well-oiled groove, sending down a flood of haggard light.

"Come on!" said the sailor, and he lifted the girl through the hole in the ceiling and followed after.

THE room in which they found themselves was empty. It was lit by the dull-red, scanty glow which came from an open-work silver brazier swinging on delicate jeweled chains from the vaulted ceiling. A tiny window was set high on a wall, and a door led away from the left. On the wall opposite, another window, lower than the first and larger in size, was boarded by heavy wooden planks painted with bright and intricate designs of snarling golden dragons in a tossing sea of crimson and black. Higginson studied the first window speculatively.

"Too 'igh up," he decided, "even for an able-bodied seaman, and too small to crawl through—chiefly you in your evenin' dress, lydy—why, it'd rip to shreds!"

"Let's investigate the other window."

After a few minutes' examination they found a small crack in the boarding and, since the sailor's knife had been confiscated in prison, they used woman's favorite weapon, a hairpin, until they had enlarged the crack sufficiently to look through. At first they saw nothing except a mass of varicolored incense smoke. But presently Marie's eyes grew used to it. She stared—and let out a scream, which she quickly suppressed.

"Wot's wrong?" asked Higginson.

"Nothing much—only, I think, by escaping from the prison, we rather jumped from the frying-pan into the fire. Look!" She pointed through the thin crack. "It's the Temple of Horrors!"

"'Orrors is bloomin' well right," admitted Higginson as, emerging from the swirls of incense smoke, he saw looming up ghastly images of people being killed by slow Chinese tortures; as presently, even as they watched, a farther door opened into the temple and, with a savage thumping of drums, a clash of cymbals and a shrilling of reed pipes, a procession of masked Chinese priests entered, led by a giant high priest who was naked to the waist.

They were followed by a dozen torch-bearers, their flaming torches lighting up the interior with many colors. Then came a procession of soldiers. They were officers, judging from the embroidered insignia on their tunics, and they bore swords and pistols and daggers which, as if asking for divine blessing, they deposited at the feet of the idols, while, at the same moment, a chant arose, rather a long-drawn wail, in Chinese monosyllables. The high priest turned. He faced the crowd. He lifted his hands in an annular, straight up-and-down motion, commanding silence, which dropped like a pall. Then he bowed three times before a great statue of the Buddha. Another priest handed him a human skull on gold chains that was filled with burning embers. He blew upon them till they shot forth tongues of vermilion light. He bowed again, and like a herald, roared out a single Tatar word:

"*Kieng-ssel*"

"*Kieng-ssel*" The crowd took up the word in a mad, whirling chorus, and the sailor clutched Marie's arm.

"I knows that word!" he whispered raucously. "I've picked up a bit of Mongol lingo 'ere and there. A sacrifice—that's wot the word means! That sanguinary blighter is arskin' for a sacrifice! I knows wot 'e's drivin' at! I fought in the Boxer war. Lydy—this 'ere ain't no plyce for two peaceful Anglo-Saxons!" He dragged her away. "Wot'll we do?"

"The door!" She pointed at it.

"And then wot?"

"Carry on, Mr. Higginson!"

"You're a brick, Miss Campbell!"

"And you're a peach, Mr. Higginson!" He gave a gallant flourish.

"I always did like Yanks, Miss Campbell."

"Sure I am one?"

"My word—ain't you? Can a duck swim? If you ain't a Yank, then George Washington was an Eyetalian!" And Marie could have hugged him for the remark.

They crossed to the door, opened it carefully, listened, looked. There was no sound. Then they stepped out into another corridor, bright-lit with swinging yellow lamps. It was really more than a corridor—more like a long hall, very high, with a vaulted ceiling. Up to a height of seven feet the walls were covered with stucco, white on white, ivory and snowy enamel skilfully blended with shiny white lac, and overlaid with a silver-threaded spider's web of arabesques, as exquisite as the finest Mechlin lace, and of Sanskrit quotations in the Devanagari script, showing that the temple had been built many, many centuries earlier, in the golden days when Hindu priests first brought the peaceful words of the Lord Gautama Buddha from across the Himalayas and before the Mongols twisted the gentle message according to their tortuous, mazed mentality. The upper part of the walls, too, must have been decorated by ancient Indian craftsmen. For above the white stucco was a procession, a panorama of conventionalized Hindu frescoes—an epitome, a *résumé* of all Hindustan's myths and faiths and legends and superstitions.

The tale of a nation's life, Asia's civilization and faith—yes, and crimes and virtues and sufferings, here, in front of them, and Higginson was strangely silent, while a thought came over Marie that here she was an intruder, not physically but mentally.

"What can we do?" she asked out loud. "Hobson's choice, don't you think, Mr. Higginson?"

"Right-o!"

So they walked on, down that everlasting corridor, with all Asia's gods jeering at them from the wall paintings, and looking left and right for a door, a window or some other avenue of escape, when very suddenly Marie was startled into complete immobility.

Directly in front of them the corridor came to an end, or, rather, it broadened out, swept out into a circular hall, the walls covered with slabs of delicate marble carved so that they looked like sculptured embroideries, with splendid Pekingese furniture of black teakwood, a profusion of enameled-silver ornaments, and the floor covered with huge Ming rugs of orange, gold and imperial yellow.

"Gawd!" whispered Higginson.

Marie was near fainting. She steadied herself by clutching frantically the sailor's strong arm.

And yet the thing which had stirred them so profoundly was only a face—that of an old man, wrinkled, brown, immobile on a scrawny neck, which was like the slimy stalk of some poisonous, incredible jungle flower, the body, arms and legs wrapped in layers of thin muslin, sitting upright on a great chair of carved rosewood that was filled with a profusion of pillows in embroidered imperial Chien-lung silk.

A hard face to picture, to describe, as Marie saw it there, suddenly, with a saraband of purple shadows bringing it into stark relief—it would take the hand of a Rodin to clout and shape the meaning of it, the taint of death, the flavor of dread tortures which surrounded it like a miasmic haze. The face of a sensual, plague-spotted, latter-day Roman emperor it seemed to her, blended with the unhuman, meditating, crushing calm of a Chinese sage—heavy-jowled, thin-lipped, terribly broad across the temples, and with an expression in the pin-points of the black eyes like the sins of a slaughtered soul. All Marie could see and feel was the existence of those features in front of her—grotesque, monstrous, unhuman—and she wanted to shriek—she wanted to beat them into raw, bleeding pulp!

PERHAPS the whole sensation, the whole flash of emotions lasted only a moment. Perhaps it was contained in the fraction of the second it took her and the sailor to pass from the corridor, properly speaking, into the hall. At all events, suddenly she was herself again, and she could tell by Higginson's tautening biceps beneath the pressure of her fingers that he, too, was regaining a semblance of composure.

She now jerked her wits into a fair imitation of nerve-control and, side by side with Higginson, took a few steps forward, slowly and deliberately, until she was within a few feet of the face. And then, all at once, it lost its stark immobility. The thin lips trembled and curled. They laughed—yet it was not exactly a laugh—rather a harsh, ghastly, scraping sort of cachinnation.

"Wot ho!" cried the sailor, with hysterical, forced gaiety. "I thought as yer were a bleedin' mummy, me lad!"

And then the lips opened over toothless gums and pronounced words in good English:

"Ah—Miss Campbell!"

Her answer came stammering, ludicrously inadequate:

"Oh—you—you know—who—I——"

"Who you are? Of course. Am I not the *Chuen to yan* of this temple—of all our sacred brotherhood? I know a great many things—some of which I should know—and some of which"—again he laughed thinly, mockingly—"I should not know. And I am glad, very glad indeed, that you decided to come here to me of your own free will. Your reward will be resplendent. I punish—yes—harshly. But I also reward—generously!" And the thin lips held a tremendous, rather heroic earnestness.

Marie's mind worked with the instantaneous flash of a camera-shutter. This, then, was the *Chuen to yan*, she said to herself, the man—whatever the words meant—whom the Manchu woman had accused with her dying breath, of whom Judge Winchester had spoken. He was quite evidently the man in back of all this trooping, coiling maze of mysteries and intrigues. Then she considered that the *Chuen to yan* had assumed she had come here of her own free will. Here was a card ready to hand, a trump-card if she played it well, and she *would* play it. She was only afraid of what the sailor might do, might say. And so she spoke very quickly.

"This man," she said, "came with me. He is my confidential servant."

She waited, tensely expectant, wondering if the lie would hold good, immensely relieved when the Chinese waved the sailor's presence aside with his hand.

"Yes," he said; "some of these coarse-haired barbarians are quite trustworthy." Marie pressed firmly on the sailor's arm as she heard a belligerent rumble in his throat. "It is strange." He pointed to the pillow at his feet. "Sit down here, child," he continued in a kindly voice.

SHE obeyed. There was nothing else to do, she thought. She would have to play her cards carefully, one by one as they came. She looked up at the man, and he stared back at her with black, unwinking eyes.

"You have the thing with you?" he asked.

Again she guessed quickly.

"The Tchou-fou-yao vase?"

"What else is there which might matter to me—to us? Give it to me."

"I have not got it here. You see"—she hesitated—"I did not trust myself to——"

"Oh, yes! You did wisely. It is better to be careful. D'Acosta is no fool. Nor is Sun Yu-Wen. Where is the vase?"

"Send some reliable servants with me—afterward some soldiers—and I'll lead them straight to the hiding-place."

"Immediately!"

His left hand reached up, about to strike a gong above his head. But she interrupted him.

"Wait!" she said.

"Why?"

"First—tell me—you spoke of reward—a generous reward——"

He smiled sardonically.

"Greedy, eh? *Hayah!* Children are greedy—and women—and sparrows——"

Marie laughed frankly. Here was a chance at repartee after her own heart.

"Can you blame them?" she countered. "If women don't look out for themselves, certainly the male of the species will not."

He laughed too.

"A lesson you learned in America, eh? Perhaps—by the Buddha—a wise lesson. And so you——"

"Yes," smiled Marie; "first the reward."

"What shall it be?" he asked. "Gold or——"

"Power!" said Marie in a whisper, wondering if she had played trumps.

"Power?" The man stared at her. "You are true to your blood. And suppose I give you power, how will I know that I can trust you? Have we of the sacred brotherhood"—he drew up his shriveled, age-worn body—"the sacred brotherhood which we, still, though the coarse-haired barbarians once called it the Boxers, name by its ancient and honorable title"—he whispered it with eery, sincere reverence—"'the Society of Augustly Harmonious Fists'—have we of the brotherhood, have the dead patriots who belonged to other similar brotherhoods ever been able to trust you—the people of your blood?"

Marie looked up. "The people of your blood," the man had said—and what had he meant?

"But—" She stopped, uncertain how to proceed without showing her ignorance.

"You have always been our enemies," the man continued. "You came as foreigners, conquering barbarians! You never assimilated with us—with the black-haired race. You do not look as we do. You do not dream and aim as we do. As barbarians you came; as barbarians you remained—whatever you call yourselves, Manchus, Tatars, Turks or what-not! Once, perhaps, you were Asiatics—but you mixed your blood during the many centuries you lived in Russia, in Germany, in the West—and as foreigners you came among us. Thus"—the man seemed swept on by a tremendous, bitter sincerity of purpose—"you always stood by the other foreigners when they invaded China, and robbed and killed and enslaved——"

"No!" Marie interrupted him. "You are wrong. They did not come to murder and rob. War—yes—it could not be helped. But they came to China to bring civilization and trade—because they take an interest in in the destines of China, of Asia——"

"So?" sneered the *Chuen to yan.* "I have been told that it is dangerous for the yellow man if the white man takes an interest in his affairs. There is Hongkong; there is French Indo-China; there is—*hayah!*—they came to trade, to—ah—civilize. And they remained to rule, to rob! But you must forgive me. I am rude, tactless. For you yourself are a Westerner—you are white."

"Am I?" Once more Marie decided to play boldly.

"Decidedly."

"And yet the Southern republic claims me as a subject."

"A political trick—nothing else."

"But a trick founded on fact! For there was my mother——"

"Bah!" cut in the *Chuen to yan.* "She was a foreigner—if not in citizenship, then in blood. And so was your mother's father; so was your uncle. Foreigners all! Enemies! What if your uncle, as did your mother's father and his father before him, did prefer the ancient Mongol title? What if he did like to hear himself addressed as the 'Ssu Yueh,' 'Chief of the Four Mountains'?"

Marie listened, intensely interested, as the mysterious scroll of her mother's family history was unrolled before her eyes.

"What of all that?" continued the Chinese. "His real name was Mavropoulos. He used it when he traveled in Europe, when he intrigued against us with Russia and Germany and France and the rest of the Western powers, and when he went north to intrigue with the Manchus, the aristocrats—foreigners like himself. And he sided with the foreigners until he died, while we of the south tried—Buddha, how we tried!—to save China, to make her independent. And so"—he made a slicing gesture—"he was killed, and even in death he tried to cheat us. There were only two of those Tchou-fou-yao vases that held the ancient symbol of dominion. One he had; the other belonged to your mother, his only relative, and your father took it away when he left China after your mother's death. Your uncle destroyed the one that belonged to him just before he died—smashed it into a dozen pieces so that nobody could read the hidden message pictured on the inside." He laughed. "Your uncle did not know; he never guessed that Destiny was on the side of Canton—that you would come back to China in the hour of China's need, the ancient symbol in your possession——"

THE girl was carried away by the *Chuen to yan's* passionate outburst, and it was the sailor's warning cough which brought her to a realization of her imminent danger. By this time, one of the other guards must have found the Tatar soldier whom Higginson had knocked down, or the man must have regained consciousness. There was very little time to be lost.

"You are wrong," she said in a clear, steady voice. "At least, where I am concerned. I shall return the vase to you.

Send for some of your soldiers, so that they can accompany me and"—pointing at Higginson—"my servant to the hiding-place."

"Good—by Buddha and by Buddha!" The Chinese struck the gong.

The girl smiled.

"I forgot! I should like to ask one favor."

"Name it."

She indicated her thin charmeuse frock, her bare head.

"I came directly from dinner," she said, "on a sudden impulse. And my servant, too—he is still in his working-clothes——"

"The Buddha once remarked that vanity is woman's most human illusion," he replied, with a laugh. "Very well. Over there"—he pointed to a huge chest in the corner—"you will find what you want."

AND when, a few minutes later, half a dozen stalwart Chinese soldiers, led by an officer, entered, Marie and Higginson were transformed, at least in externals, into fair imitations of two Chinese, in embroidered robes, mutton-pie caps and neat, black-velvet slippers with padded soles. The *Chuen to yan* turned to the captain of the guard with a flow of Chinese monosyllables, but Marie interrupted him quickly.

"By the way," she said, "there's one thing I would like to tell you——"

"Yes?"

"D'Acosta and Sun Yu-Wen——"

"A Turk and a Manchu! Dogs both!"

"Yes—but clever dogs. They have lots of people in their employ, haven't they?"

"They employ many spies. Why?"

"Well, if I were you, I would tell those soldiers not to walk alongside of me and my servant, but to follow us at quite a distance. No use drawing attention to us—to show the way to d'Acosta's and Sun Yu-Wen's spies——"

The Chinese bowed.

"A cobra and a woman for shrewdness!" he remarked admiringly. "You are right."

Again he spoke to the captain, who saluted and walked up to Marie, drawing a handkerchief from his tunic, while a soldier stepped up to Higginson.

"You will be blindfolded on your way to the street through the temple," said the *Chuen to yan*. "A necessary precaution, you understand?"

"Yes," said Marie.

"I don't care," whispered the sailor, "as long as I gets out o' this 'ere Temple of 'Orrors."

Thus, blindfolded, Marie and Higginson were led through a number of corridors, upstairs and down, out of the temple. Out on the street the captain of the guard removed the blindfolds.

"Lead," he said. "We follow."

"Right-o!" replied Marie.

"Right bloomin'-o!" echoed the sailor; and they walked on, the soldiers following at a distance of sixty steps beneath the violet vault of the dying night.

Just as they turned the first corner, they heard a shout from the direction of the temple—a loud shout that echoed and reverberated, sharp, ominous. It tore through the gloom of the dying night like the point of a knife, but was swallowed the next moment by a hunched mass of sounds as, here, there and everywhere, the doors of the houses opened and the early-morning working population poured out.

Not yet morning; but already China, never asleep, ceaselessly working to feed its ever hungry, never-satiated maw, was preparing for the morning task.

Blue-bloused coolies moved through the streets in an endless procession, each sure of his aim and object. There were men riding in two-wheeled carriages, surmounted by vaulted silk covers; others, rich merchants, drove in low victorias crowned with embroidered canopies. Came peasants on foot, on mules, on donkeys—fruit-venders—their fiery-colored produce piled high on balanced baskets, and it was finally, just as Marie and Higginson neared the second corner, that they saw their chance. The street here narrowed greatly as a Taoist temple jutted out, with a bizarre massing of pagoda towers and sharp-angled walls that were a mass of color, pink, mauve, blue, and yellow, lit by a huge paper lantern to the left of the entrance, which proclaimed in Mandarin ideographs that this was a *li-pai*, a place of worship.

At that moment, the cortège of a funeral was passing, and as the soldiers stopped temporarily to give way, Higginson and Marie, for the same reason, pressed close against a wall.

At the head of the procession came fantastically dressed servants bearing standards, insignia of rank and artificial flowers, all glittering brightly in the light of many torches; other servants rubbed bronze gongs with scarlet devil-sticks. Then came a priest, who mumbled long-winded verses from the "*Ching-Kong-Ching*," and then, garbed in white, the chief mourner, directly in front of a crimson-covered catafalque. They all walked slowly, ceremoniously, but without the slightest indication of piety. Why should they? Canton is old. China is old. Many had died; many more will die. And the women in the mourners' coaches at the tail-end of the procession seemed to know it. For they chattered and laughed, and leaned from the carriages, exchanging highly spiced compliments with the crowd.

At the very end came a number of empty coaches. They doubtless belonged to the deceased's guild-brothers, Cantonese burgesses, who, having thusly honored the dead, remained in their warm rooms. By the time these vehicles appeared, the torch-bearers had already turned the corner, and the street was again in darkness. The soldiers were screened from the two huddled against the wall by the line of coaches, and Marie, after a quick word in Higginson's ear, opened the door of one and slipped inside, the sailor following. And so, crouched on the floor of the carriage, they were carried past the soldiers, away from the Temple of Horrors, out into the heart of Canton.

"Out again, in again!" whispered Marie.

"Right-o!" rejoined the sailor. He closed his eyes. "Wyke me up when we gets to Piccadilly!"

THE cortège ambled on for about ten minutes, and then, thanks to the practical side of the Chinese nature, the two got another chance. For while it is a laudable deed to honor a deceased guild-brother by sending empty carriages in sign of mourning, there is no use of piling up expenses. So, within sight of the cemetery, and since the gatekeeper levies toll on everybody and everything that passes beneath the sacred portals, the empty coaches remained without, and presently the drivers climbed down from their boxes, tied the horses and mules, and sought refreshment in a little tavern a couple of blocks away.

By now the sun had risen still higher, but—and for this the fugitives were grateful—a thick mist had rolled up from the river. They looked warily about, and left their hiding-place when they found tha' they were alone.

"I know this 'ere town like a book," Higginson said proudly. "This is what the chinks call the K'ung-ti, the Deserted Quarter."

It was an appropriate name. For, surrounded on all sides by a packed, greasy wilderness of populous streets, it was a hopeless mass of ruins. At the farther end of the street was a tall wooden monumental gate.

"At the time of the Boxer trouble," the sailor went on, "them local Canton ruffians murdered 'ere a whole bloomin' lot of whites, and then this 'ere block of 'ouses was destroyed, as a sort o' punishment. A lot them chinks cared! They build new 'ouses." He looked for a cigarette and a match, found, lit up, and looked questioningly at Marie Campbell. "And now, lydy, wot?"

"Let's get a move on."

"Where to, would yer suggest?"

She thought rapidly. She had no idea where she might find d'Acosta or Sun Yu-Wen. But she recalled that the dying Manchu woman had told her about the "friend" to whom she should go, and he, she had figured out, must be Prince Pavel Kokoshkine; she recalled, too, the American consul having told her where the Russian lived—on the other side of the river, not far from the Nan-Hai prison. She gave Higginson the address.

"Know the place?" she wound up.

The sailor inclined his head ruefully.

"I knows most prisons in this 'ere dump," he said, " 'cause o' them chinks frequently and unjustly mistykin' me most innercent actions. It ain't far. Let's go down to the river."

"Where is it?"

He pointed at the monumental gate.

"Just through there and down the 'ill. Syfe enough. There aint no 'ouses there."

They reached the river in safety, just where there was an anchorage for boats and launches. The sailor leading, they made their way to a spot where, tied to a low thorn-bush, was a native boat, a sampan. They waited for a few seconds, wondering if the fisherman who owned it was anywhere about. But there was no sound, not the faintest sign of life. Marie stared across the river—it was a symphony of drowsy murmurs and fleeting, veiled shadows.

Safety lay there, if anywhere, she thought. She said so to the sailor. He shook his head dubiously.

"We'll see in 'arf a moment," he replied, "as the josser remarked when 'e put 'is last 'arf-crown on a rank outsider."

Higginson jumped into the sampan, which tilted and careened dangerously. He stretched out a hand and helped Marie in, then untied the rope with a sailor's skill. They were off, the man rowing at a good clip, putting the full weight of his shoulders to the oars, while the girl sat in the stern, directing the course with the quaint, square Chinese rudder. A hard pull it was; for the river, bloated by the spring monsoons, was a turbulent yellow giant. Twice she changed seats with Higginson when his arms got numbed. Steadily the southern shore slipped away from them, while they bore down on their course, dead toward the promontory which Higginson said was their goal. Near shore their task became more difficult. For a wind had sprung up which moved heavily against them, trailing gray sheets of rain-laden clouds. It made the light sampan bob to windward, and they had their work cut out to keep on a steady course.

Finally they reached shore and walked up the hill that rose before them.

"'Ere you are!" said the sailor, pointing straight ahead. "Me old friend—the Nan-'Ai prison!"

"Looks more like a temple to me."

"Used to be one—before them practical-minded Southern chinks turned it into a jail."

She saw the fantastic, exaggerated contour of the pagoda roof, burnished, enameled in spots, mirroring the rays of the sun a thousandfold, like countless intersecting rainbows. From the window near the roof a shaft of light stretched out like a long, osseous yellow hand.

Higginson walked steadily on, with the girl following. So far they had not met a single human being, but, as they neared the top of the hill where the pagoda-prison opened to the road with a huge gate, they were halted by the snick of a breech-bolt and a raucous voice—evidently a challenge—in Chinese. But Marie let out a whoop of joy when the sentinel stepped forth from behind a tree, rifle in hand, for, in spite of his Chinese uniform, there was no doubt that he was a European.

"Hello!" she cried. "I am glad to see you."

The man smiled. But he shook his head.

"*Nie! Nie!*" he replied. "No Englees! Russky—Russian——"

"Wot d'yer mean 'Russian?'" asked the sailor. "Can't yer talk the king's bloody English?"

"*Nie.*" The man laughed.

"Why, yer poor benighted Bolshevik——"

At once, as he heard the one word, the soldier's smile disappeared and gave way to expression of wolfish ferocity. He picked up his rifle and broke into a flood of excited Russian.

Higginson jumped back.

"'Ave a 'eart!" he cried. "Ain't yer got no sense of humor, yer silly josser? I didn't mean to call yer a Bolshevik. Honest to Gawd I didn't!"

MARIE stepped between the two men, smiling brilliantly at the Russian.

"Me—want—see—prince," she said, very loud, and in that broken English which people, for some mysterious psychological reason, employ when speaking to small children and large foreigners. "Savvy?"

"That oughter fetch 'im," commented the sailor admiringly.

"*Nie,*" replied the Russian.

"Look here!" The girl returned to the attack. "See—Prince—Kokoshkine!"

"Ah!" A light of understanding eddied up in the man's eyes. "Pavel Alexandrovitch?"

"I—want—speak—to—him—savvy?" She gesticulated wildly to make the man understand. "Get me? Kokoshkine—Prince Kokoshkine——"

"*Da, da, moya dorogoya!*" The Russian smiled. "Yes, yes, my dear!"

It was evident that the man understood. He whistled shrilly. A few minutes later another soldier came from a little outbuilding, which seemed to be the guard-house. The first gave him rapid instructions in Chinese, and turned, motioning to the two fugitives to follow him.

"Rather early to be about," said Higginson, as they passed through the gate; "'ardly four bells. I 'ave an idea as 'ow 'is 'ighness will still be in the arms of Murphy."

But, in spite of the early hour, they found the inner courtyard, a huge, stone-paved affair, crammed with human life, soldiers as well as civilians. The soldiers were hard at work, drilling, mostly in sober brown uniforms—Chinese with a sprinkling of Tatars. But some of the officers were Europeans, evidently Russians, and still in the uniforms of the czar's army.

"Heavens! I thought the war was over," said Marie.

"It ain't over—ever!" replied Higginson, with sudden seriousness.

They passed some batteries practising drum-fire with blank shells, and a troop of Tatar cavalry, who came on, straight, lances at the carry, thundering across the hard-baked drill-ground, their horses mostly new, shaggy mounts, not yet broken to the roll and sob of the guns. Finally they crossed the great parade-ground, and, through another metal-studded gate, passed into an outer hall, where a liveried Chinese servant received them.

The soldier spoke to him, and the other bowed and departed, to return shortly afterward, accompanied by a tall Russian, dressed in a general's uniform—a very handsome man, dark, clean-shaven, with a short, softly curved nose and straight black eyebrows which divided his gray eyes from the high forehead. He wore on his tunic the Cross of Saint Vladimir.

"I am Kokoshkine," he said, clicking his spurred heels. "And you—*mademoiselle*——"

"I am Miss Campbell—whom you invited to dinner to-night. But—would you mind offering me breakfast instead? I am positively starved!"

Kokoshkine smiled. He bent over her hand and kissed it.

"You are just in time," he replied. "I was about to sit down to my morning meal." His English was perfect, with hardly a suspicion of Slav purr; and Marie, quick at reading character, as quick at making up her mind in human relations, liked him at once. He turned to the soldier, speaking in Russian, and then asked Higginson to accompany the other. "Hungry, eh? Could you do with a steak?"

"My word!" came the enthusiastic reply. "Could I do with fifty bloomin' steaks!"

"And a whisky and soda?"

"Dook"—the title was conferred honestly—"them is the first kind words I 'eard since I landed in this 'ere 'eathen town!"

Higginson pulled at his forelock and followed the soldier out of the room, while Kokoshkine held open the door to the next apartment, where the table was already set—very exquisitely, with delicate Chinese eggshell porcelain, Russian silver samovar and tea-glass, and a profusion of flowers, in strange contrast to the martial simplicity of the room, the military maps on the walls, the soldier's kit here and there on table and chairs.

"Another cover!" he ordered the soft-slippered Mongol servant.

A FEW minutes later, sitting across from Prince Pavel Alexandrovitch Kokoshkine, Marie did justice to a hearty Russian breakfast with a hearty American appetite. Occasionally, out of sheer, unthinking human liking and sympathy, she smiled at her host, who smiled back and who, when thrice she put down fork and cup, saying, "I want to tell you—ask you—" stopped her with a gesture.

"There is no hurry, Miss Campbell," he said. "Eat—rest yourself. Are you in trouble?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. We'll straighten it out for you—never fear!"

She believed that he would.

Several times the breakfast was interrupted by officers, Chinese and Russians, who came in, made reports, and were sent off with short, crisp words of command, and also by the sound—from a large maneuver field at the other end of the promontory, the prince explained to her—as the batteries there did target-practise with blank shells.

"Peaceful sort of life you are living here!" she remarked in one brief interval of silence.

He smiled.

"I don't care for it myself. Being a soldier, I naturally hate war. But I must be prepared to—to—" He hesitated.

Marie forgot her own quandary as she remembered what she had heard about this man, the imperialist, the former officer in the czar's army, now drilling Cantonese troops, in the service of these Southern Chinese radicals, whose ideals must have been the very opposite of his own. With American directness she cut in on his hesitation.

"You are an aristocrat, a czarist, aren't you?"

"The czar is dead, *mademoiselle*."

"All right. But you are still an aristocrat."

"Decidedly."

"Then why do you——"

"*Mademoiselle*—please—we will not discuss my personal affairs. You came here, I take it, to talk about your own affairs."

She was a little nettled.

"Oh, very well," she replied. Then, quite suddenly, her slight ill humor disappeared. After all, the man was right. She had been rash, tactless. "I beg your pardon," she said, smiling at him frankly.

"Oh—I did not mean to——"

"But I do beg your pardon. Really—truly! I should not have asked you. And now"—finishing her last glass of tea—"I want to tell you——"

"Do, Miss Campbell!"

"I am in a frightful mess, and Liu Po-Yat told me to come to you—at least, I guessed it was you she meant."

"Oh—then she spoke before she died?"

"You know that she——"

"Was murdered? Yes, Miss Campbell. I know"—he smiled—"a great deal—pardon—of what affects you."

"Seeing that my father is not here to correct my language, I suppose I may say what is on my mind—and express it exactly the way I feel?"

"Of course."

"Very well. You've said a mouthful, Prince!" And while he laughed, she went on: "I would have been tremendously disappointed if you had *not* known all about me. Why should you have been the one exception in Canton? Why should you have been slighted? Everybody else here knows all about me—except my little self. Moses d'Acosta, Sun Yu-Wen, Monsieur Pailloux, Judge Winchester, the *Chuen to yan* in the Temple of Horrors——"

"Oh," he exclaimed, utterly surprised, "you know those last two?"

"I just came from there."

"What?"

"I had such a pleasant interview with them."

"And—they let you go, Miss Campbell?"

"No; I just went. That's why I am here—breakfasting with you."

"Tell me——"

"I hardly know where to begin." But she told him all that had happened to her, as well as most of her suspicions and deductions, finally taking the *North China Gazette* clipping from her purse. "Here is the thing I told you about," she ended. "Can you make head or tail of it?"

He took it, read it, then looked up.

"YOU said something about d'Acosta's saying it referred to your uncle's death and came out in the *North China Gazette*. Is it quite clear?"

"You call that clear?" said Marie. "What's it all about?"

"Well," he rejoined, "I really know a great deal about Chinese lore. Let's dissect this sentence by sentence. Now, the first two exclamations of the article: 'Omniscient Gautama! Far-seeing, all-seeing Tathagata!' Taken with what it says afterward, as well with what actually happened, the man who caused this to be printed in the *Gazette*——"

"My uncle?"

"Yes. By this double exclamation he tried to express two overlapping thoughts—one of death and the other of life, one spiritual and the other materialistic. First, he appealed to the Buddha, the eternal deity. But by using the word 'Gautama,' he demonstrated that he was addressing the Buddha in his reincarnation of Lord of the Dead, thus showing that he himself did not expect to live much longer. On the other hand, by using the decidedly more worldly 'Tathagata' appellation of the same Lord Buddha, he endeavored to show that, although in the shadow of death, he was still sufficiently interested in materialistic affairs to appeal to the living, not to all living beings, but only to those who were 'far-seeing, all-seeing,' and by this he meant those who would see far enough to understand the thing which was all-important to him. Clear so far, is it?"

"Oh, yes—after you play dragoman."

" 'How multiform the consolation of Thy Word!' " continued the Russian. "This, too, is couched in mystic, esoteric language of Chinese theology, so that it may only be deciphered by the initiated. It means that the writer is not afraid of death or of what the future may bring—'consolation,' don't you see? While, 'How marvelous Thy Understanding' refers again to the Buddha as well as being another reference to the living, those among the living to whom he is making this appeal, in the shadow of death—of murder, as he knew it would be, as it did turn out to be. And the last sentence contains the final appeal——"

"To the Buddha?"

"No, Miss Campbell; to one among the living—to you!"

"How do you know?" cried the girl.

"By one word in that last sentence: 'Mara.' It is the name of one of the feminine deities of the Buddhist heaven, comparable to Fate. But it is also—" He smiled. "Miss Campbell," he went on, "doesn't 'Mara' remind you of something?"

"Why—" She considered; then suddenly. "You don't mean, by any chance, my own name—Marie?"

"Exactly! Marie—that's what your father called you. But your mother's name was Mara, and 'Mara' she called you. She died a few days after you were born, and your father left, a broken, sorrowful, embittered man. He had loved your mother much. Oh—it had been such a romantic meeting, such a sweeping love and passion! And all the obstacles he had to overcome! Your mother's family and clan objecting—but, finally, your father won out. They were married. Then she died, and he took you back to America. Perhaps, with that superstitious Scotch mind of his, he was afraid of the name 'Mara'—changed it to Marie."

"How do you happen to know all this?"

"Part of my duty," he replied.

"Duty?"—wonderingly.

"Yes. Political duty. And your father never told you a word?"

"He hardly ever mentioned my mother—the memory seemed to hurt him."

"Nor of China?"

"Only when I left home, when I told him I was coming here. He asked me to take along the little Chinese vase. It seemed to him like a sort of talisman."

"It is," said the prince gravely. "A talisman of dominion—of ancient power and prophecy. Power—dominion—bitterly contested!" he added grimly, as again, from the outside, came the roar of the batteries at target-practise, a huge salvo belching up, stopping abruptly, then followed by another burst of sound waves like a giant beating a huge metal drum.

A MOMENT later a giant, ruddy-complexioned Tatar came in. He was booted and spurred, dressed in a loose white tunic, the insignia of high military rank embroidered over his heart in purple and silver. The Russian introduced him to Marie.

"Feofar Khan, the Tatar general." He continued in a whisper, "One of your uncle's best friends and, by the way, a relative of yours."

"Oh!" Marie looked up, interested.

"Very distantly. Both your mother's family and his own claimed descent from Genghis Khan, the Central-Asian freebooter who once conquered China in a moment of enthusiasm. Not very popular with the Chinese—these Tatar gentlemen."

"So the *Chuen to yan* told me."

The prince turned to Feofar Khan, who talked to him in rapid Mongol monosyllables, again bowed to Marie, saluted and withdrew.

"Am I interfering with your work?" asked the girl.

The prince appeared to be a little nervous. But he shook his head.

"No, no!" he said. "I've plenty of time—nearly half an hour. In the mean time—what we were talking about—why, it may, in fact, help me to—" He interrupted himself. "We were speaking about the Tchou-fou-yao vase, weren't we?"

"Yes. And my uncle's last message." She pointed to the clipping. "Tell me one thing: Surely my uncle must have realized that I would not be able to interpret this cryptic message of his—even if I did chance to run across it?"

"As to your happening to run across it, tell me—when did you leave America?"

"The middle of August."

"Your uncle died—was killed a few days after you left. *After* you left," the prince repeated significantly. "He knew that you were coming here."

"How did he know?"

"All these years he never lost track of you. You were his only blood kin, remember, the last descendant of his ancient clan. He knew you were coming to China, and assumed that you would see the papers as soon as you arrived. People pounce upon the papers after an ocean voyage. And the *North China Gazette* prints a special monthly edition to meet travelers on landing. That's where this clipping is from."

"I remember how the people grabbed those papers up in Hongkong."

"You see, Miss Campbell? And as to

your being able to decipher the message, well, a dying man will clutch at a straw. Your uncle, the last few months of his life, was surrounded by enemies. He did not dare write. He did not dare express his final message in words which his enemies might understand. But everybody in China knew that he was one of the world's leading authorities on Buddhistic legends and frequently made translations of them for English papers. And so, surrounded by enemies, nearly alone, helpless, desperate, knowing that death was near, knowing, furthermore, that you were on your way to China, he clutched at a straw."

"Straw is right!"

"Perhaps, of course, he also depended on his friends to help you decipher it. Miss Campbell, I was your uncle's friend. I could not help him—he was way out there in Urga, in outer Mongolia—still, I was his friend——"

"And—my friend?" she asked impulsively, holding out her hand.

He took it in both his, raised it to his lips and kissed it.

"Yes," he said. "And I am very proud that you call me friend—very proud indeed!"

HE LOOKED at her. A moment her gaze held his. Then she dropped her eyes. She blushed slightly—hated herself for blushing—as she felt a strange, sweet tightening about her heart. She forced her voice to be dry and quite matter of fact as she asked the next question:

"Tell me—how does it happen that everybody here—I mean d'Acosta, Sun Yu-Wen, Pailloux, the Cantonese authorities—is all so well informed about me? Why—d'Acosta actually discovered that I liked the caviar they served aboard ship."

"I know he did." The prince laughed.

"Didn't you send some to Mr. d'Acosta for the dinner he invited me to last night?"

"Guilty, Miss Campbell."

"Don't apologize. It was first-rate. Still—why do they all know about me?"

"Won't you get it through your charming little head that you are really a very important personage in China?"

"Only in China?"

"Also in the eyes of at least one Russian."

"Thank you, kind sir!"

"You see, Miss Campbell, they are all playing for a gigantic stake here. So they employ spies, confidential correspondents. Take me, for example. I knew exactly when you left America—friend of mine over there cabled me——"

"Who?"

"A young American with whom I became very chummy a few years ago in London when he was assistant secretary of the American embassy. Clever chap—very brilliant member of your own intelligence service—quite in sympathy with our party here. Chap called Van Zandt."

"You don't mean Tom Van Zandt?"

"The same."

"Incredible! Footless, dear old Tom! Why, his main interest in life seemed to be the color of his spats, and his one claim to distinction a jade cigarette-holder ten inches long!"

"A great Manchu duke gave him that cigarette-holder," said the prince, "because he helped the duke out of some grave political trouble."

"Tom," she repeated, shaking her head, "who couldn't say 'boo' to a goose!"

"That's one way of fooling the world," explained the prince. "Van Zandt told me often that he considered his spats and his tiny mustache and the vacant stare in his eyes among his chief assets in the intelligence service. People, just naturally, think him a fool—and so they tell him things. You see"—he consulted his watch—"you came here well advertised." He rose and buckled on his sword.

"Why did they all wait so long until they interviewed me about the Tchou-fou-yao vase?"

"At first we were not sure if you had it."

"Who are 'we'?"

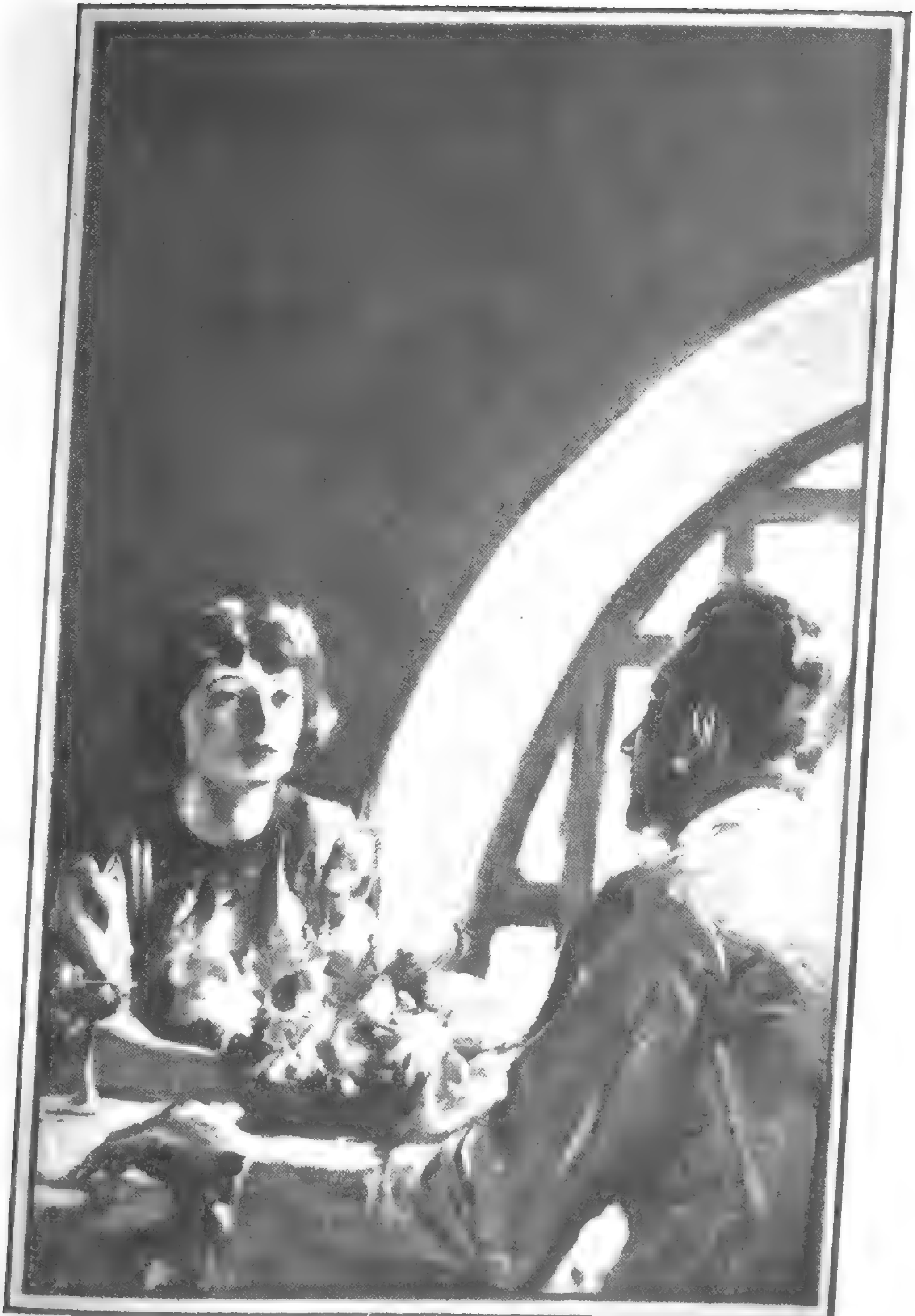
"D'Acosta, Sun Yu-Wen and myself."

"The three of you are friends, then?"

"Very great friends—in a way. We even work for the same object—the same general aim. But there are differences of opinion—perhaps of ideals. I have no time to explain now." And, while he saw to the loading of a brace of cavalry pistols, he went on, "A few days after your arrival, we sent a confidential agent to your hotel, a woman, she took a position as maid——"

"Liu Po-Yat, the Manchu?"

"Exactly. She told us as soon as she found out that the vase was in your possession. Even then we were careful. For we



"I want to tell you——" "Do, Miss Campbell!" "I am in a frightful mess, and Liu Po-Yat told me to come to you—at least, I guessed it was you she meant."

were not sure if you were familiar with the trinket's significance. Also, we wondered if the other party——"

"The *Chuen to yan's* brotherhood——"

"Yes. We wondered if they had approached you, had perhaps come to terms with you—by—pardon me—bribery or perhaps threats or skilful diplomacy. Pailloux had an idea they had."

"That bearded Frenchman seems to be a traitor."

"Evidently. But things in Canton were coming to a head. We dared wait no longer. The three of us decided to risk it, to come to you, to ask you for your help and trust in spite of Pailloux's advice—"

"You did not come together?"

"No. According to our old three-cornered agreement, given the—oh—difference in ideals, each proceeded independently of the other——"

"A Far-Eastern idea of the Three Musketeers, eh?" She laughed. "All for all—and each one for himself! And Mr. d'Acosta got there first. He chose his moment well. He knew that I owed a large hotel bill——"

"Oh, yes." Kokoshkine smiled. "He is a shrewd Levantine—a clever financier." He slipped the brace of pistols into his belt.

"Why the murderous preparations?" asked Marie Campbell.

"Events are developing rapidly, gravely. A moment ago, when Feofar Khan came in, he told me that the *Chuen to yan* and Judge Winchester have found out about how you fooled them. Listen!" He pointed through the window whence, suddenly, the artillery practise having ceased, there brushed in a great flourish of hoarse-throated trumpets—those three-yard-long, thin-snouted, straight-stemmed Chinese war-trumpets—blaring in a half-chorus, first hanging desperately on a high, shrill note, then suddenly tumbling an octave and roaring a bassoonlike charge in unison like a herd of enraged bulls. He picked up his military field-glasses, adjusted them, peered through them, and gave them to the girl. "Over there," he said. "On the other side of the river. Look!"

And she beheld there, minute but distinct through the powerful lenses, a large body of soldiery.

"There are other garrisons in this town," said the prince, "besides the one which I command—those over there are Prince Tuan's men, Mohammedan ruffians from Kansuh and the west." She saw the bright cluster of banners round the squadron commander, saw the horses and their riders pushing through the clouds of dust which floated high above them. She noted the bright crimson of their tunics and the blackness of their turbans, saw more men run up, carbines in hand, swing themselves rapidly into high-peaked saddles and gallop away in different directions.

"War?" demanded the girl.

"No. At least—not yet. I told you—didn't I?—that you are an important personage here. These troopers are being sent out to search the town for you, high and low. They will do their utmost. They must have the vase—*and* you. To-day, if possible. And there is little they will stop at. They may actually invade the foreign quarter, the Shameen, and then"—he shrugged his shoulders—"there will be trouble. That's what Feofar Khan told me a while back. The *Chuen to yan* sent me orders to join them with a troop of horse."

"And—are you going to obey?"

"Yes."

"But—you—a European—an imperialist, how can you?"

A strange expression came into the gray eyes.

"Miss Campbell," came the enigmatic reply, "I have my own philosophy in life. And one of my maxims is that, even if you are the most devout Christian in the world, you cannot attempt to save your life by reciting the New Testament to the tiger who is about to pounce on you—nor that you can keep faith with the jackal, who could not keep faith with you. Never mind—I'll explain it to you some other time"—he kissed her hand—"when we shall be even greater friends than we are to-day."

A COSSACK orderly entered, received an order in purring Russian and withdrew. Pavel Kokoshkine turned to the girl.

"About the vase?" he asked. "It is in the hotel safe, you said?"

"I left it there."

"And have I your permission to take it?"

She pondered for a moment, remembering her father's words, that she should not use the vase unless she absolutely had to. And again she felt the sweet tightening about her heart as she looked at the Russian and then, quite suddenly, with a sublimely feminine lack of logic, she decided that the moment had come of which her father had spoken.

"Yes," she said. "Take the vase."

"But—you don't know how I shall use it—what I am going to do with it?"

"Oh——"

"You trust me, Miss Campbell?"

"Yes."

"And—perhaps—you like me?"

"Very much indeed."

"I am glad." He tightened his belt-buckle. "You see"—he said it very simply—"I love you—you don't mind my telling you?"

She did not reply at once. She had felt that this was going to happen. Finally she looked up, and said,

"I am so glad you love me."

"You—you mean—" His voice cracked.

"Yes, dear," she replied to his unfinished question, and she walked up to him, her face uptilted, her lips slightly open, and, as he still hesitated, she lifted her hands and buried them in his thick curly hair. She drew him down to her and kissed his lips. Then she blushed, receded rapidly, hid her embarrassment in flippant, frivolous words:

"Don't you ever dare tell me that *I* proposed to *you!*"

A moment later the door opened and Feofar Khan came in.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Ready, General!" replied the prince.

The Tatar bowed to the girl, then addressed his superior officer.

"What about Miss Campbell?" he asked.

"That's what is bothering me," said the other. "I am afraid to leave her here, and of course I can't take her along."

"I am awfully sorry I am such a nuisance," smiled Marie, and, after Kokoshkine had explained to her that he had decided to take with him only those troopers whom he could trust absolutely, leaving the garrison in the hands of his Chinese men, that, on the other hand, he could not leave her here with the same Chinese soldiers, radicals every one of them, who, given the *Chuen to yan's* many spies, might discover her identity and whereabouts, she said quite calmly that the only thing for him to do was to take her along.

"Impossible!" cried the prince.

"On the contrary—quite possible," said Feofar Khan. He bowed to Marie. "Miss Campbell," he said, "I am a much married man. I have taken nearly the full quota of four which the Koran permits the true believer. And yet—" He smiled.

"A proposal of marriage?"

"Strictly temporary. Will you, for the time being, join the number of my wives?"

"Safety in numbers!"

"Even so," objected the Russian, "the situation remains the same—the Chinese might suspect——"

"Being Chinese, they will never guess at the simplicity of utter audacity," said Feofar Khan. "On the other hand, being Asiatics, even these Southern radicals will draw the line at suspecting or searching the palanquin supposed to contain an inmate of my harem. Then in town, if we should have to, I have some Tatar friends who will take care of her."

Marie laughed.

"I never imagined that there could be so many gorgeous thrills in the world," she said.

"My apartment is across the hall," continued Feofar Khan. "I have with me some women servants from my own country, entirely trustworthy. They knew and worshiped your uncle. Come—we have not much time to lose."

HE TOOK Marie to his apartment and gave rapid instructions to three ruddy-complexioned old Mongol women. They laughed and salaamed. He left; and a few minutes later Marie returned, looking for all the world like a Tatar girl of the far-western plains—that hardy race born and bred on horseback—in a coat of heavily quilted silk that reached half-way to her knees, riding-boots, high-heeled and rowel-spurred, loose breeches of untanned leather, conical head-dress, and her face covered by an orthodox Moslem horsehair veil.

"Breeches!" She laughed. "How shocked my father would be if he knew!" She surveyed herself in the mirror. "Rather becoming, don't you think?"

"Keep the costume," Feofar Khan said. "It is yours."

"Thanks! I shall wear it when I get back to New York—at the very first fancy-dress ball given by the Junior League. I'll be a riot!"

Meanwhile, in the outer courtyard, the

Russian, Tatar and Manchu troopers and officers were assembling as a giant Circassian captain brought the army-whistle to his lips, strapping on carbines and revolvers, others bringing out the horses, with a babel of cries in purring Slav and harsh Mongol. Confusion, impatience, a crackling of steel, a sinister thumping of kettle-drums, but finally order and discipline by the time Prince Kokoshkine and Feofar Khan came into the courtyard, where their orderlies were standing by their horses' heads.

Not long afterward there was the rhythmic thud of a dromedary's padded feet and, grumbling, spitting, protesting, the grotesque animal came into sight, a gaudy palanquin litter slung to the left of the great hairy hump, while the driver, Feofar Khan's body-servant, was clinging precariously to the arrangement, half side-saddle and half chair. Came Marie, her eyes gleaming excitedly through the meshes of her veil, and escorted by Higginson, who, judging from his uniform, had by this time given up his seafaring vocation to take service in Prince Kokoshkine's European contingent.

Feofar Khan salaamed deeply before Marie. He lifted her up into the palanquin litter and closed the thin curtains of yellow silk, but not before he had improved the occasion by assuring her loudly in his native tongue, so that all the Mongol soldiers might understand, that she was the latest addition to his harem, his youngest and best beloved wife.

Then there came a bugle-call and the cavalcade moved out of the courtyard with a jingle of spurs and sabers, Prince Kokoshkine riding on the left of the palanquin, Feofar Khan on the right, and so they rode down the hill and skirted the banks of the Pearl River, which they crossed farther down-stream with the help of half a dozen great flat ferry-boats.

All the way across, as they entered Canton proper, as they rode through the native streets, they heard the bull-like roar of Chinese war-trumpets. Panic was licking the town with a tongue of flame. The crowds, hardly knowing why, were beginning to grow uneasy, nervous. They rode down the street of Excellent Purity, past the Temple of the Monkey and the Stork. On its threshold stood a gaunt priest, holding a tall pole with a red banner high in his hands.

"*Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang!*" he shouted, with the full force of his lungs. "Death to the works of the foreigners and honorable loyalty to China!" His voice throbbed with fanatic, horrible sincerity.

"*Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang!*" Here and there, in the throng of coolies and merchants, isolated voices took up the cry; and Prince Kokoshkine spurred his horse more closely against the dromedary's heaving flanks.

"Don't be afraid, Marie," he whispered up through the curtains, rising in his stirrups.

She smiled bravely.

"I am not worrying, dear," she said.

"*PAO Ch'ing Mien Yang!*" cried the gaunt priest of the Temple of the Monkey and the Stork.

"*Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang!*" whispered an almond-eyed Cantonese servant in the Shameen, as he set his white master's breakfast-table with minute care.

"Kindly eschew political discussions—at breakfast, Wong," said his master, who happened to pass through the dining-room, and also happened to be Moses d'Acosta. "What is the trouble?" he asked.

"No savvy," came the reply in pidgin, with the stereotyped words of all Chinese when they do not wish to speak the truth, and, once more the gentle, patient servant, "Bleakfast leady."

D'Acosta smiled.

"Eat it yourself," he said. "I am going to take mine at the Grand Hotel." And he left the house and turned down the street.

He passed numbers of blue-bloused coolies on their way to work. They seemed strangely tense, talking among themselves with a low humming like that of a thousand angry bees.

Walking on, d'Acosta met Mademoiselle Droz, the exiled Parisian vaudeville actress, out on her morning constitutional.

"You seem out of sorts, *mon p'tit,*" she said. "Any special reason?"

"Yes."

"Namely?"

"This is China—and we are white."

"Nothing new in that. We have always been white—and this has always been China."

"That's just what I am kicking about."

"Oh?"

"Yes. Don't you think there is something disconcerting in being waited on by those who you know are waiting on murder and sudden death?"

"Did your boy try to kill you?"

"No. He is fond of me, and a decent lad."

"Then——"

"He is a Chinese. He may slit my throat to-morrow, in spite of all his liking for me."

"Why don't you leave China if you don't like it? You have plenty of money."

"Money? Bah!" He was quite sincere. "There are also my ideals."

"Ideals?" She gave a cynical laugh. "Ideals are like nuts. In time the kernel rots—and they become hollow. Eat them when they are fresh—then get new ones."

"You are too French for me this morning, *mademoiselle.*"

"And you too Oriental. *Au revoir, mon p'tit!*"

"*Au revoir!*"

HE WALKED on to the hotel. There the atmosphere seemed surcharged with electricity. The Chinese waiters whispered uneasily among themselves, and even the most supercilious, race-conceited European clerk at breakfast grew a little pale as he remembered tales he had heard from old-timers about the Boxer outbreak.

What made the Europeans uneasy was the fact that Pailloux, the hotel manager, was not about. When Moses d'Acosta entered the dining-room, a dozen men rose and surrounded him.

"What's all the trouble? What is happening?"

D'Acosta brushed them away with a gesture of his hand.

"Nothing is happening, gentlemen—except your own cowardice. Cowardice made the Boxer trouble possible." And he walked away, sat down, swallowed a cup of black coffee and asked the Chinese head waiter to send for Pailloux.

"He has not been home all night."

"Oh?" D'Acosta was surprised. 'All right—I'll talk to the assistant manager." The latter confirmed the information, adding that Pailloux and De Smett, the house detective, had left the hotel shortly after dinner the night before, taking Miss Campbell with them.

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. I helped her into the carriage."

"Where did they go? Any idea?"

"No—except that they drove into the native town."

"Hm." The Levantine shook his head. "I am going up to my apartment." He kept a suite at the hotel. "Kindly send or telephone to Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen and ask him to join me immediately."

"Very well, sir."

Moses d'Acosta went to his rooms. He must have furnished them in a moment of homesickness for his native Constantinople, his native Levant. For there was nothing here to remind one that this was China. It seemed rather an epitome of the Moslem Near East with its somber black-on-black shadows trooping densely on ancient Kermanshah rug, flowery Tabriz, and camel-brown, wool-piled Turkoman carpet, with the sudden, stammering lilts of sunshine dancing in through the high, grilled windows.

There was peace here, and it enveloped him almost physically. With a little sigh of satisfaction he sat down cross-legged on a huge pillow and lit a water-pipe blazing with emeralds and hard Jeypore enamel. But when, not long afterward, a servant announced Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen, d'Acosta became immediately the perfect Mongol host. For he knew the other well; they were friends in spite of their differing ideals and philosophies, and he knew how the old Manchu appreciated being shown the slightly stilted etiquette of his own race by a foreigner.

So, in spite of the fact that time and haste just now were important elements, he did not hurry his ceremonious Pekingese greetings as Sun Yu-Wen entered.

The mandarin seemed nervous, uneasy; but he, too, adhered strictly to the rules of conduct as written in the "Book of Ceremonies and Exterior Demonstrations."

Both men bowed deeply.

"Please deign to enter," said d'Acosta.

"How should I, the very little and insignificant one, deign to enter, O brother very wise and very old?" came the correct self-deprecatory reply.

Three times the invitation was repeated, to be met three times by the same answer, and finally, profusely apologizing, the mandarin entered, closed the door, and bowed again, sucking in his breath.

"Walk very slowly," said the Levantine.

"No, no!" countered the mandarin, to

show his humbleness and unimportance. "I shall walk very quickly, O brother very wise and very old!"

The other extended an arm and indicated the pillows.

"Please deign to choose a place for your honorable body," he said. "Take the west side—the side of august honor."

"Every place is too flattering for me, the very small and insignificant one."

"Won't you deign to drink?" continued the Levantine, after both had sat down.

"Thank you. I shall drink, if at all, from a plain wooden cup with no ornaments."

"No, no!" exclaimed the other. "You shall drink from a precious cup of transparent green jade with three orange tassels." He clapped his hands; the servant entered, brought tea and sweets and cigarettes, and it was then that the two strangely mated friends spoke of what was on their minds.

"You have heard about Miss Campbell?" asked d'Acosta.

"Yes," replied the Manchu, with all the bland peacefulness of the Buddha who sees the world crumbling into dust but shows no trace of emotion.

"What do you think will happen, Sun Yu-Wen?"

"That is on the Buddha's knees. Ahee!" The Manchu sighed.

The other made an impatient gesture.

"Suppose—if you will pardon me saying so—we hustle the Buddha a little and give him a push in the right direction."

The mandarin, frankly Mongol, and therefore frankly irreligious, was nowise shocked.

"Can we?" he smiled.

"At least we can try."

"How, my friend? You don't know, eh? Nor do I."

"But—to give up——"

"What else is there to do? Listen!" He pointed at the window. "The trumpets are roaring. By this time the *Chuen to yan's* jackals are all over town. And then?" He folded his hands calmly across his obese body. "We be important men, you and I. These many years we have been almost sacrosanct. But even the fleetest horse cannot escape its own tail. My friend," he added, "perhaps my spirit, released from his fleshly envelope, will soon jump the Dragon Gate and kowtow deeply before the spirits of my honorable ancestors."

"You seem to relish the prospect," came the heated rejoiner. "I don't. And, as for Miss Campbell, and, also, the vase——"

"She hid the vase," interrupted the mandarin.

"How do you know?"

"Simple deduction. Last night she was a prisoner. If she had had the vase on her person, they would have found it."

"How do you know they did not find it? That is just what I believe and what I am afraid of. It is the possession of this vase which is making the *Chuen to yan's* brotherhood and all this riffraff of Southern radicals so dangerous, which is causing all the trouble."

"No! If they had found the vase on Miss Campbell, they would not mind her having escaped."

"Oh—escaped, has she?" D'Acosta was astonished as well as relieved.

"Yes."

"Sure of it, Sun Yu-Wen?"

"Absolutely. My spies told me. Therefore, I repeat, since she did not have the vase, she has hid it, and that is why all these Southern jackals are nosing the ground. And they will find it. They will search everywhere. The little jackals will lick blood, will like the taste of it. It will mean death—for many—in Canton, death—for all—in the Shameen!"

"Logical enough. There remains one hope—one man—Prince Kokoshkine."

"HE LEFT the barracks early this morning," said the Manchu, "on the *Chuen to yan's* orders—my spies brought me word."

"He—he obeyed the orders?"

"What else could he have done? He cannot fight all Canton."

"Did he take all his cavalry with him?"

"No. Only his Russians, Tatars and Manchus. I have not yet heard from all my spies. I left instructions at my house to bring me word here. They will doubtless report by and by. We will wait—there is nothing else for us to do." He sipped his tea, then looked up, very grave. "D'Acosta," he went on, "we have been friends—we three—you and I and Pavel Kokoshkine. We—all three—have worked for the same aim, the peace of Asia, which means, perhaps, the peace of the world. Our methods have differed. For we belong to three different races, Slav, Jew and Mongol. You have believed in building with the power of money, of finance, of big business, to make China so independent out of her own resources that she can resist the world economically—and thus command respect. I cling to the philosophy of my ancestors and also, being not altogether a fool, to certain more constructive maxims. I believe in the power of diplomacy, the wonderful diplomacy of the old monarchy, the Manchu régime, which found its pinnacle and its pride in the late dowager empress. Thus it has been my idea always to bring back the monarchy and, with it, peace. And Kokoshkine, the soldier, believes that peace can only come through war or the threat of war. That is why he has taken service under the Cantonese government, to lead them, to become all-powerful, to undermine with their own troops the influence of the *Chuen to yan's* brotherhood, then to strike when the moment was ripe. We failed—you and I and the Russian. All our three methods"—he smiled very gently—"have proved useless, barren. Finance, diplomacy, force—useless—all three, all three!" He sighed. "We differed, when really even to differ was only a waste of time."

"And yet," rejoined the Levantine, "we three agreed on one thing—the power of superstitions and ancient traditions. The greatest power here in China!"

"Yes," admitted the other; "the power contained in that vase. And there, too, we have failed. If the vase be lost, then lost is its power to us. And if it falls into the hands of the *Chuen to yan's* brotherhood—My friend, I have already instructed my relatives in Peking to bury my body in a charming spot, on the side of a hill, with an exquisite view over the fields, so that my spirit after death may thoroughly enjoy itself. There is no hope, for you, for me, for Pavel Kokoshkine. If the latter turns against his Cantonese master, then the odds are too high—they will crush him. If he does not turn against them, then presently the *Chuen to yan* will kill him as one too powerful, too influential, as soon as he has sucked him dry of military knowledge and tactics. It is over. The book has been read. The grape has been pressed." He drew an opium-pipe from his loose sleeve, rose, and took the smoking paraphernalia from a small lacquered table in the corner of the room. "Have I your permission to take a few whiffs of the black smoke—to make the end more sweet?" he asked; and, when the other inclined his head, "Thank you, old friend!"

Delicately he kneaded the brown poppy cube against the tiny bowl of his pipe, then dropped it into the open furnace of the lamp and watched the flame change it gradually into amber and gold. The opium boiled, sizzled, evaporated. The fragrant smoke rolled in sluggish clouds over the floor, and Sun Yu-Wen, having emptied the pipe at one long-drawn inhalation, leaned back, both shoulders pressed well down on the pillow, so as better to inflate his chest and keep his lungs filled all the longer with the fumes of the kindly drug. A slow smile overspread his placid butter-yellow features. He stared at the rolling opium clouds. The noises of the outer world, the tumult and the riot, the crackling of steel and hate, the roaring of the Chinese war-trumpets seemed very far away; and he was already floating on the fantastic, grotesque wings of poppy-dreams when the Levantine shook him by the shoulder. He sat up, rubbed his eyes.

"Yes?" he asked dreamily.

"Tugluk Khan is here."

IMMEDIATELY the mandarin became fully conscious, pushed his opium-pipe away with a regretful gesture, and smiled at Tugluk Khan, his chief spy, a Moslem Tatar from Chinese Turkestan, dressed in the orthodox blue of a Cantonese coolie, who stood before him with clasped hands.

"What news?" he demanded.

"I passed Prince Kokoshkine's troop of riders below the corner of the Loo Man-Tze Street," replied the other. "Feofar Khan was with him."

"They saw you?"

"I was in a crowd of coolies. I did not dare speak. But I touched the bridle of his horse, asking for alms as if I were a beggar, and as he bent down to curse me, I whistled two shrill notes, as do the long-limbed rice-birds of our own west country. Allah grant he heard and understood!"

"He did not speak?"

"Wait, master! For there is one strange thing of which I must tell you. Feofar Khan has his youngest wife with him."

"Youngest wife?" cut in the mandarin. "Ridiculous! I know that Tatar reprobate. He loves soft hands and melting eyes. But he has three wives already, each as old and shriveled as the devil himself, and each henpecking our brave general with the strength of her tongue. They are jealous of each other. But against a fourth wife they would make common cause. He would not dare marry again. Besides, I saw him only two days ago. He was not married to a young wife then. And a Tatar wedding takes seven days to celebrate."

"But I heard, master!"

"What?"

"What he said to her. She was in a palanquin slung to the flank of a dromedary, with Feofar Khan riding on one side, Prince Kokoshkine on the other. And, after I whistled the call of the rice-bird, Feofar Khan rose in his stirrups and spoke to his young wife, through the curtains."

"What did he say?"

"He called her 'Blood of my Liver' and 'Pink-breasted Pearl,' and——"

"Never mind those Tatar terms of endearment. What else did he say?"

"He begged her—the narrow-footed one——"

"Wait!" interrupted the mandarin. "Tell me—aren't you Tatars proud of your women's short, broad feet?"

"Yes. But Feofar Khan did call her narrow-footed! He begged her pardon for exposing her to the rough tumult of the streets, and added that soon she would be at rest in more fitting surroundings, in the house of his second cousin, Hunyagu Khan."

Sun Yu-Wen looked up, startled.

"At rest—in the house of Hunyagu Khan—did he say that?" he demanded.

"Yes, master."

The mandarin laughed, while the Levantine looked on in astonishment.

"'Trust the snake before the devil, and the devil before the Tatar.'" He quoted the ancient proverb. "Good, good, my Tugluk Khan!" He tossed the latter a purse filled with gold coins. "You have done well. Rest yourself. Go down-stairs to the kitchen and ask the cook to give you of his best. I shall send for you when I need you."

He dismissed his spy and turned to Moses d'Acosta, every bit of lethargy gone from his placid face.

"My friend," he said, "it appears that I was wrong, after all, about my spirit jumping the Dragon Gate. For the end is not yet!"

He started toward the door. "Come!"

"Where to?" asked the Levantine.

"To the house of Hunyagu Khan!"

"But," came the objection, "I am not worse than the average coward. Still, for the two of us, marked men both, to go beyond the Shameen—with the *Chuen to yan's* jackals roving everywhere——"

Again the mandarin laughed.

"You own this hotel. Ever consider its location?"

"I have. And right now I don't care for it. It is too near the outer wall which divides the Shameen from the native town, in the direct danger-zone."

"For which praises be to the Lord Buddha!" said the Manchu. "You see—Hunyagu Khan's house is at the very edge of the native town, just on the other side of the outer wall which surrounds the Shameen. His back courtyard runs parallel with yours. You understand?"

"I do—now!" exclaimed d'Acosta. "Seems to me that Feofar Khan sent a message after all."

"He did, indeed. He asked us to meet him, or if not him, then his youngest wife—the narrow-footed one—in Hunyagu Khan's house. Narrow-footed—a white woman, don't you think?"

"Miss Campbell?"

"Right you are!"

THEY left the hotel and stepped into the back courtyard, a small enclosed place, above it the back of the hotel rising and presenting a windowless expanse of whitewashed bricks. The only opening was a narrow door, behind a screening cluster of bushes, which led into the kitchen. But, from snatches of talk that drifted up from there, they knew the cook and his assistants were just then fully occupied. For, true to his master's instructions, Tugluk Khan was just then bullying the personnel of the kitchen to his heart's content.

D'Acosta looked round warily.

"All right," he said. "Here's for Hunyagu Khan's house!"

The Shameen wall was perhaps ten feet high and crowned with a stone coping, but a couple of feet from the ground there was a narrow ledge from which they could reach the top. The Levantine, thin and lithe, swung himself up first, then lent a helping hand to the Manchu, whose girth was not meant for violent exercises. For a moment they balanced on the wall, then let themselves drop on the other side. They got up, crossed the courtyard, and knocked at the back door of Hunyagu Khan's house, who, true to his clannish breed, employed only Tatar servants. They entered, and shortly afterward Hunyagu Khan came from an inner apartment.

He kowtowed before his guests and gave them a hearty welcome.

"Yes," he said, after they had told him why they had come; "you are doubtless right. Wait here. My servants are close-mouthed and trustworthy. My house is yours, and so is my feeble strength. No, no; do not thank me! I am but the lowly dust beneath your charming and exquisite feet."

He clapped his hands. A servant entered, received his orders, and returned with steaming cups of tea and cigarettes. They sat down. And, while outside the great yellow city was coiling like a snake about to strike, while the war-trumpets roared louder and louder, while Moses d'Acosta looked on, wondering, slightly impatient, the two Mongols talked gently and lengthily of other, unworldly matters, with the dignity of men at whose back three thousand years of unbroken racial history and pride were sitting in a solemn, graven row.

"Yes, yes," said Sun Yu-Wen in answer to one of Hunyagu Khan's remarks; "it is mentioned already in that delicate tome called 'Ku-Luang's Commentary' that——"

The voice droned on, and Moses d'Acosta was falling into uneasy sleep when he was suddenly wakened by a great tumult outside, a neighing of horses, a jingling of head-stalls, a crackling of steel, a thumping of kettle-drums, and curses, shrieks, cries—and, clear above the mad symphony, a rough voice shouting a hectic torrent of words, a crazy mixture of terms of endearment and full-flavored Oriental abuse.

"Feofar Khan!" said Hunyagu Khan. "I know his voice—and his choice of language."

"LITTLE pink-and-blue sweetmeat! Little melon seed of much delight!" shouted Feofar Khan above the din of steel and jingling bridle. "Oh, narrow-footed one!"

Moses d'Acosta inclined his head.

"Yes," he said; "Feofar Khan is continuing the telling of the message," while outside the latter went on, bewailing the sending of cruel, stony fate which had forced her, his youngest wife, for love of him to leave the "fat and warm security of the harem, to launch herself upon the bitter, bitter waters of adventure and fatigue and extremely bad roads.

"Ahee!" shrieked the Tatar general. "And to have swine-fed Kansuh ruffians, to have the very sweepings of the Canton gutters crack low jokes at me and my beloved narrow-footed one to the detriment of my nose!"

"Listen," said another voice.

"I shall not listen! All I could I have suffered, like the gentle, patient man I am! But to have you—the great chief whom loyally I served—to have you doubt me!"—and a sound very much like weeping.

"But what do you want?" asked the other voice.

"I want a safe asylum for my youngest wife, here in the house of my kinsman. Permit me to take her into the house, to introduce her to my cousin, to beg him for hospitality——"

"I told you that we are in a hurry, that——"

"Yes, great master; you told me—at least, you gave me to understand—that you do not entirely trust me—and it is that which hurts most. And all because of that great and most evil grandson of a cockroach, Sun Yu-Wen, and that unbeautiful and illegitimate descendant of many piglings, Moses d'Acosta——"

The other voice cut in again, sharp, high:

"Feofar Khan, I do not mistrust you. Nor is it my intention to interfere in your domestic affairs. It was foolish of you to bring your wife along——"

"I love her, O great chief!"

"Foolish just the same. All right. She has my permission to go into Hunyagu Khan's house. No"—quickly—"she can go alone and explain matters to your cousin. You will stay here with me, as will Prince Kokoshkine. I need you two."

"Who is that speaking?" asked the Levantine, and a servant whom Hunyagu Khan had dispatched through a side door came in and replied that it was the *Chuen to yan*.

"The *Chuen to yan's* soldiers are knocking at the gate," he reported. "They have a woman with them."

"Heavens!" exclaimed d'Acosta. "This is the front room—they'll find us here——"

"Where?" asked the mandarin.

Hunyagu Khan laughed.

"I am a Moslem," he said, "and, I trust, orthodox. There is always safety and privacy in an orthodox Moslem's house—if he be broad-minded enough to forget at times his orthodoxy. Follow me."

They crossed the room at a rush, another, and yet another, while in the distance they heard the outer gate open, heard the rough accents of Cantonese soldiers, and, finally, at the end of a hall, their host pulled apart a gaily flowered curtain.

"My harem," he said. "Come! Let's forget for the time Moslem prejudice and etiquette!"

THEY entered quickly, amid great laughing and giggling and chattering and clanking of jewels and rustling of loose silk trousers, as their host's wives and daughters and female slaves rushed about, staring for a moment wide-eyed at the male visitors, then rapidly adjusting their face-veils and fleeing precipitately into a back apartment. Hunyagu Khan left, to return a few moments later, ushering in a veiled woman, clad in the height of fashion of the Mongolian plains.

"The narrow-footed one!" he introduced and laughed, while the newcomer took off her face-veil, showing the smiling face of Marie Campbell!

"Hello, everybody!" she said, and to the Levantine: "I always did pity Oriental women—to-day more than ever. My word—these veils are stifling, and hardly hygienic, I should judge!" She sat down on a divan. "I am famished and thirsty and, since my father isn't here to kick the ceiling, I'm simply dying for a smoke."

Moses d'Acosta held out his cigarette-case. She lit up, leaned back comfortably, and blew out three perfect smoke rings.

"Your nerves seem to be still in working order," commented d'Acosta.

"Have to be! I am a remittance-woman, am I not? And your hotel—why—the prices you charge—if your guests didn't have iron nerves, they'd die of heart-failure when they see their bills! Which reminds me. Last night I rushed off suddenly from dinner. I owe you and Mandarin Sun Yu-Wen an apology. But when you mentioned that Tchou-fou-yao vase again—I couldn't stand it any longer."

"Yes," smiled the Manchu; "and it seems that you ran into a great deal of trouble, Miss Campbell." He sighed. "What did I tell you last night? Oh, yes—I told you, that it is strange indeed how the fate of the many millions depends always from a woman's jeweled earrings. Miss Campbell," he added, "have I your permission to speak once more about the little Tchou-fou-yao vase?"

"Go ahead," laughed the girl.

"You have it?"

"I hid it."

"Will you give it to us?"

"*Us?*" she echoed. "Last night there seemed to be a difference of opinion between you and Mr. d'Acosta."

"Last night the danger was not as imminent as it is to-day." And he explained to her how he, Moses d'Acosta and Prince Kokoshkine were friends, each working for the same aim, the peace of the world through China's peace, how they had differed on the question of method, but how all three knew that supersitition was the greatest power in China. "Superstition and tradition!" he wound up. "In this land of ancient superstitions, ancient traditions! Contained in two little vases——"

"One of which my uncle broke to pieces. Oh, yes—Pavel told me——"

"Pavel?"

She blushed slightly.

"Prince Kokoshkine, I mean. You can tell me more about the vase later on. In a hurry to get it, aren't you?"

"Yes, Miss Campbell."

"Very well. The vase is in the hotel."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Levantine. "I had the hotel searched—even your rooms."

She laughed.

"Nice, honest host you are, aren't you? I shall complain about you to the Hotel Men's Association as soon as I get back to New York. But there is one place you forgot to search."

"Namely?"

"The little safe in Pailloux's private office. I slipped it in there on the second shelf, way back amid a lot of old papers. I did it on a woman's instinct——"

"Blessed be woman's instinct!" said the Levantine. "It's a much more powerful weapon than man's logic." He was out of the room, and a moment later, looking from the window, they saw him cross the back courtyard and swing himself across the Shameen wall into the hotel grounds.

WHILE they waited for his return, the mandarin told her about the power and influence of the little vase—and a queer tale it was, intensely Chinese, intensely Asiatic, reaching into the dawn of legendary antiquity, stretching on, through the gray, swinging centuries, into the present era. For it appeared that, hundreds of years earlier, at the time when Chi Huang-Ti, the ruler of the Chinese feudatory states which laid the foundation of the Celestial Empire, began to build the Great Wall of China and to fortify old Peking as the only means of stopping the marauding Mongol horsemen, a sainted priest was given two tiny vases by a wandering monk—the Buddha himself, the legends told—with the injunction to guard them well. For whoever possessed these vases, Chinese or foreigner, would by the strength of them have dominion over China. The stranger—monk or living Buddha—had pointed out on the inner surface of the vases a miniature painting of China's ancient divinities. They were all there, very tiny, but all-powerful; and, since the Chinese are intensely practical, the sainted priest had been given two vases, in case one should be broken or lost. The vases, the double emblem of dominion, had gone from century to century, from hand to hand, from dynasty to dynasty. When Genghis Khan, the great Mongol conqueror, had come out of the bleak Hsing-an Mountains to subjugate China, he had taken the vases, had paid homage to them, and after him his grandson, Kublai Khan, all the cruel Mongols of the Yuean dynasty, the Mings, and the Manchus. The Manchus, too, had passed, and it was many years before her death that the dowager empress, obeying a dream, had sent the vases to the far west, to the Ssu Yueh, the chief of the Four Mountains, for safekeeping. Had come the revolution, the republic—"and," Sun Yu-Wen wound up, "you know the rest."

"Is this little emblem really so powerful?"

"Absolutely! No Chinese, not even the most modern, the Westernized and scoffing and atheistic, would dare disobey its hidden command."

"And—I suppose," asked the girl, "no Chinaman would dare risk its destruction, now that my uncle has destroyed the duplicate and only one is left."

"You are right, Miss Campbell."

Then, when she was silent, her face cupped in her hands, evidently deep in thought, he asked gently,

"What are you thinking of?"

"Of Pavel Kokoshkine. Out there"—she pointed to the window, whence came, louder and louder, the riot and tumult of the crowds, the loud braying of trumpets—"riding through the streets by the side of the *Chuen to yan*, helpless——"

"Force was his belief. Steel and bullets. They failed him."

"As diplomacy failed you—and finance failed Mr. d'Acosta, and"—she slurred, then smiled—"I wonder if you were perhaps right about—how did you put it? Something about all the world dangling from a woman's jeweled earrings, wasn't it?"

"Doubtless I was right," said the Manchu.

"I am beginning to agree with you. And do you know why?"

"No."

"Because at times there is an idea——"

"In the jeweled earrings, Miss Campbell?"

"No. In the feminine brains behind the jeweled earrings. You'll forgive me—won't you?—if I pat myself on the back."

She laughed, but when, a few moments later, Moses d'Acosta returned and gave her the little vase, she grew serious. Dominion—she thought, as her fingers touched the cool bit of porcelain—dominion and power in this small piece of glazed clay! She looked at it, wondered. What had caused her mother to give the tiny thing to her father on her death-bed, as she must have done? A spirit of prophecy? She shrugged her shoulders. However, it had happened. She rose, and put on her thick horsehair face-veil.

"I am going," she said.

"You are—what?" The two men's astonished voices came simultaneously.

"Going."

"Where?"

"To the Temple of Horrors." And she cut through their excited buzz of expostulations with: "Send some of Hunyagu Khan's servants with me—Buddhists. I don't suppose all his people are Moslems. While I am gone, communicate with the *Chuen to yan*—can you?"

"Yes," said the Manchu. "One of my spies is quite near. But——"

"Tell the *Chuen to yan* I have the vase. Then bring him with you to the Temple of Horrors. And—Pavel Kokoshkine—don't forget to bring him, too, whatever else you do."

"But what do you expect to do?" demanded Moses d'Acosta.

"Are you a poker player?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I am going to draw four cards—with the hope that I'll accumulate a royal flush."

NOT many minutes afterward, accompanied by half a dozen of Hunyagu Khan's stalwart Tatars, who had received orders to obey her implicitly, she was out on the Canton streets, and to her dying day she never forgot the next quarter of an hour—the tumult, the riot, the crowds of excited coolies, the *Chuen to yan's* jackals scurrying everywhere, like scorpions, searching, searching—for her. She never forgot the ever-rising shouts of "*Pao Ch'ing Mien Yang*"—"Death to the foreigners," the insane fervor of the throngs, the incredible, trembling elation of hate. What was it all about? The crowds did not care, did not know. But it swept over them like a typhoon, and steadily they seemed to crystallize their one purpose—the Shameen—the hated foreigners there! And the mob gathered strength and volume, rolled on relentlessly, and it took all the physical force and all the diplomacy of the *Chuen to yan's* picked agents to keep them from their purpose. "Not yet!" the *Chuen to yan* had ordered. "We will not fight the foreigner—not unless we have to. Search! Find! You must find!"

Marie was grateful to her retinue of Tatars. They cut through the throng as a knife cuts through cheese, shouting insults and defying words at everybody, and belaboring with a beautiful impartiality the backs and thighs and heads of merchants and peasants alike.

"Oh, thy right!" they yelled, as they brought down their long, brass-tipped staves. "Oh, thy left! Oh, thy face!" suiting the swing of their sticks to the part of Chinese anatomy which they were striking. "Give way, unmentionable ones! This is a great lady on her way to sacrifice to the spirits of her honorable ancestors!"

Pushing, fighting, striking, Marie in the middle, they pressed on, and finally gained the Temple of Horrors. There the crowd was a little less dense. The door was open. Marie looked. She saw inside, wreathed in incense smoke, the dread statues of horror, and, at the farther end, the one representation of sweetness and gentleness, a great statue of the Goddess of Mercy. There were a number of yellow-robed priests in the temple, but they gave way when the Tatars told them that this was the wife of a great Mongol chief come to pray.

So, preceded by her escort, Marie entered the temple. She crossed its full length until she came to the statue of the Goddess of Mercy. It stood on a gilt lotus pedestal above a long sweep of steps. Upon these she knelt and prayed, prayed fervently to the God of her childhood, prayed and waited, minute after minute, the tiny vase clutched tightly in her hand.

Presently, as if from a great distance, she heard voices and footsteps. She turned, saw the *Chuen to yan* enter the temple, accompanied by a number of high priests, and behind them, driven on by soldiers' musket-butts, Sun Yu-Wen, Moses d'Acosta and Prince Pavel Kokoshkine, their hands tied behind their backs. She waited until they had crossed half the length of the temple. Then she rose and called out in a loud, clear voice:

"Here! I am here!"

And suddenly she rushed up the steps that led to the statue of the Goddess of Mercy, stood there, the vase in her hand; and while the priests rushed about like angry bees, crying excitedly: "A sacrilege! A sacrilege!" her own voice came ringing, high and strong.

"I am speaking to the *Chuen to yan*, the chief of the Society of Augustly Harmonious Fists!"

The *Chuen to yan* stepped forward and looked up at her. For a moment there came again that blighting fear she had felt when she had looked upon those features for the first time. But she controlled herself immediately. She was playing for a great stake, she told herself, and she held the winning hand. She was sure of it.

Still he gazed up at her.

"Ah!" he breathed, just the one word, mockingly.

"I am here."

"So I notice."

"And"—she opened her hand, showed a rapid glimpse of the tiny vase—"I have the vase, the Tchou-fou-yao vase—the ancient emblem of dominion and power!" When the priests heard the word "Tchou-fou-yao," something like a shiver ran over them and they kowtowed deeply. "I give you the choice," she went on.

"What choice?"

"Either I put the vase here, at the feet of the Goddess of Mercy, so that it may remain here for all time to come, as an emblem of China's greatness, greatness in the past, greatness again in the future—that it may remain here forever, made sacred by the protection of this goddess." Her words came sweeping, with an intense sincerity of which she had not thought herself capable. "If I do that, then I want your word, your sacred word of honor by whatever you hold holy, that you will make peace——"

"Peace with whom?" the *Chuen to yan* demanded, a strange, eery look coming into his eyes.

"Peace with all the world! No longer the war of intrigues, of gliding words and lies! But peace, chiefly and foremost, with these three men"—she pointed to d'Acosta, Sun Yu-Wen and Kokoshkine—"who work for China, even as you are working. Peace—through compromise! But if you do not do as I tell you, I shall drop the vase. I shall smash it into a dozen pieces, as my uncle smashed the vase he had."

"You would not dare!"

"I would! And you know I would! And then lost for all time the hope of dominion and peace and power! Yes! I would dare—and you know I would!"

There was a moment's complete silence; then, from the throng of priests, who had caught the meaning of the words, a cry went up—not a hundred cries, massed and blended into one, but just one cry, such as one would imagine to follow the death of the last hope, the last faith, the last promise from the face of the earth. And suddenly the *Chuen to yan* inclined his head.

"You win," he said very calmly.

For he was a Chinese, an Oriental. A fanatic? Yes. But also a fatalist. Fight the inevitable? And what price was there in that, what pride, what logic and worth?

HE TURNED to the soldiers, gave curt orders, and a moment later the bonds of the three prisoners were cut.

It was the Manchu who spoke first.

"*Chuen to yan*," he said, holding out his hand, "let us forget what has passed. Let us work together—in the future—the four of us! Was it not Confucius himself who once said that the superior man gives in, but aids to achievement, while the inferior man remains stubborn and leads to ruin?"

'Yes," replied the *Chuen to yan;* "the four of us."

"Oh, no!" laughed Marie, coming down the steps of the pedestal. "Not the four of you! Only three."

"Why?" asked Moses d'Acosta.

"Because one of the four is coming home with me—to America." Again she laughed and slipped her hand through Prince Kokoshkine's arm. "Pavel," she said, "would you mind cabling to Tom Van Zandt as soon as it's safe to go back to the Shameen and ask him to be your best man?"

"Gladly!"

"And another question: Are you awfully proud about that title of yours?"

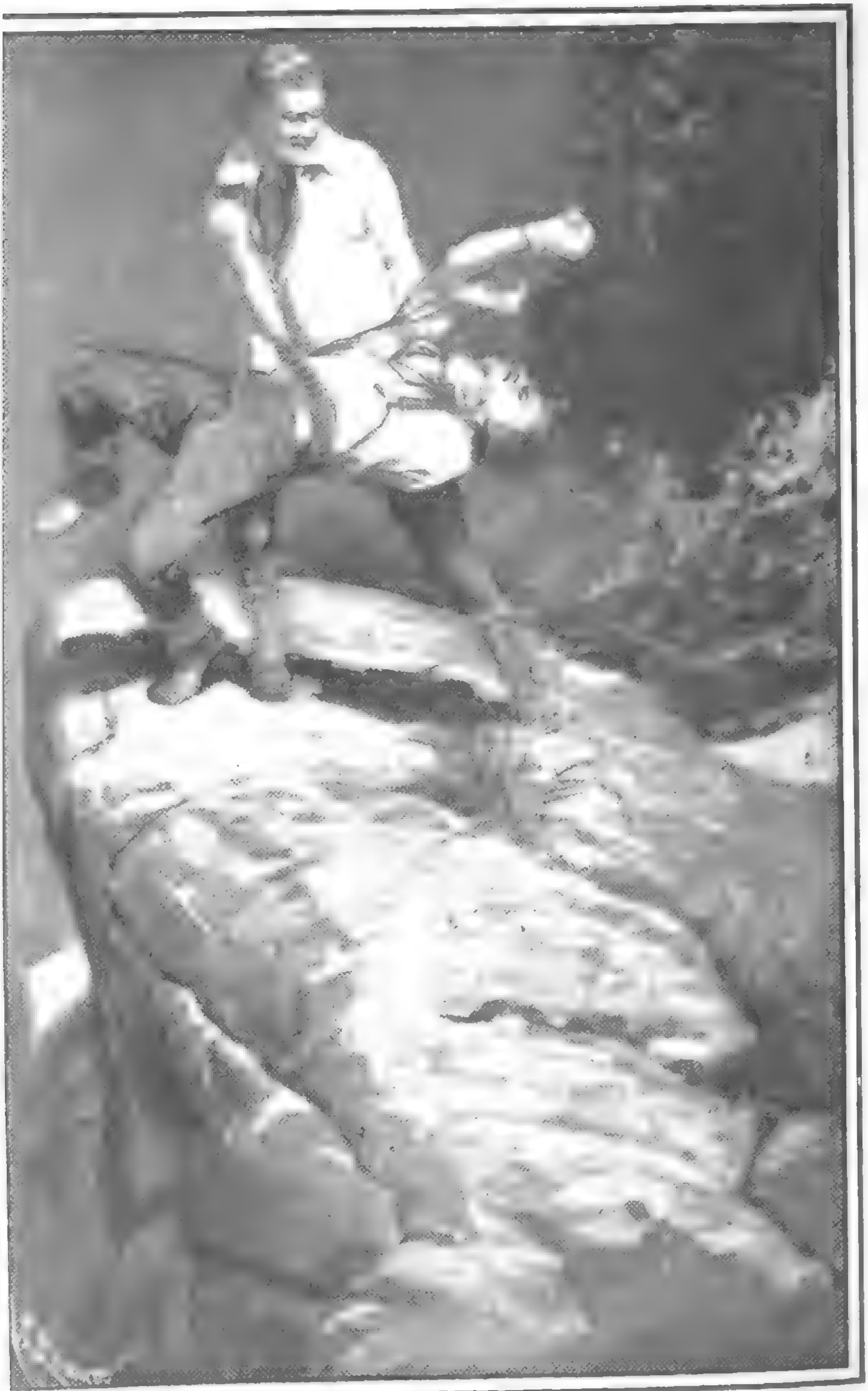
"Not a bit, dear. Why?"

"Well—you see—it appears that father never became naturalized, and that, through my mother, I am a Chinese subject. And so it's up to you to become an American citizen. And you can't do that if you stick to your title!"

And they laughed and kissed, while the Goddess of Mercy looked down upon them with her painted eternal smile.

The Soul-Scar

A THREE-PART serial by **Beldon Duff**, author of "Twenty-four Hours," will begin in the August issue—out July 15th. Who is Beldon Duff? *See Chimney Corner, page 179.*



Gene lifted the battered body of Pete Slade and held the man outward over the torrent. "Beg!" he cried in the voice of victory. "Beg: crawl to her and beg, or I'll drop you!"

Harum-scarum

Forceful, Dramatic, a Story That Will Hold You, May Make You Angry—but Remember That the People the Author Is Describing Are Primitive, Brutal, and That He Knows What He Is Talking About

By Clarence Budington Kelland

Illustration by H. C. Edwards

TOM DOWD, walking boss of the Tabor Lumber Company, was at work on a difficult job. He was making a woodsman out of young Gene Tabor, the old man's nephew.

It was not that Gene lacked the essentials of a woodsman or river-man; but the fact of the matter patently was that the young man was so exceedingly interested in "being agin the gove'ment," as Tom said, that any regular occupation found difficulty in pinning him down. Gene was born unruly; he lived only for the sake of kicking holes in rules and regulations, and his idea of bliss was to get himself into some sort of scrape from which escape seemed impossible. He had been tossed forcibly out of no less than six preparatory schools and two universities, and at the age of twenty-two was regarded by friends and relatives as a first-rate menace to civilization.

Notwithstanding all of which he could count more friends than the most virtuous, and was so delightfully care-free and debonair in his deviltry that even old man Tabor could not find it in his heart to "skin the boy alive."

"I hain't got no idee where he'll bust out next," said the old man to Tom. "He's licked 'most everybody in these parts—jest in fun, kind of. He's handcuffed a deputy sheriff with his arms round a spruce tree. He's sprinkled cow-itch on the floor of a dance-hall. Gawd knows what he hain't done, and I'm 'most wore to a shadder. Now, you take him out on the drive and see if you can't git him to drownd himself ridin' a log through Checkerberry Rips."

"He hain't mean," said Tom calculatingly. "He's jest playful, kind of."

"He hain't never stole nor cheated nor kidnaped no child nor run off with nobody's wife, if that's what you mean. And I hain't never seen him mad. But ruther than keep him underfoot another day, I'd take a swarm of yaller bees to bed with me. You git him away from here before I up and run him through the hawg for fuel"—the hog being a mechanical device of the macerator sort for reducing slabs and other unsizable bits of waste timber to fragments suitable to the appetite of the boiler-room.

"Gimme him, then," said Tom.

So Tom put young Gene in a wagon loaded with other more desirable supplies for the wangans and started for the lake. He committed a tactical error at the outset. Instead of driving Gene to his destination by the long road through Taradiddle and across Hulling Machine Bridge, he took the short cut through Checkerberry.

Checkerberry possessed no feature to attract attention. Straggling along for half a mile as it did, a slatternly settlement of a dozen or more shanties guiltless of paint or fence, it had the look of a mere drab mountain community devoted to the uses of poverty and the grim scrabble for meager existence. But it was the home of squalor and filth and evil; it was a community of rum-runners and whisky-drinkers, of men and of women who regarded no law of God, of man, or of health, whose sole distinction was laziness, and who, as a whole, could not have mustered enough virtue to give even a grayish mottling to its flat blackness.

Everybody who lived in Checkerberry was named Slade, whether his name was Slade or not. There were few in the settlements in whose veins Slade blood did not run. Its inhabitants were inbred and crossbred. At the apex of the pyramid stood Pete Slade, the mayor of Checkerberry, squaw-man, petty thief, suspected murderer, and God only knew what—Pete Slade, who had taken to wife more or less morganatically a squaw, the only one-man woman on the ridge save one. But what Pete's squaw made up in her one virtue she gave away again in filth and drunkenness.

AS TOM DOWD and Gene drove through the settlement, Pete's squaw became visible. It was after this fashion: First, there appeared through a window, bringing with it glass and sash, a wooden kitchen chair with three legs. The half of a table followed after a scarcely appreciable pause. Other fragments of furniture crashed out through door and window, and then a squat, greasy-haired woman darted out, ax in hand, and stood staring about her malevolently. On a tree hung a tin wash-tub. She regarded it an instant, strode toward it and savagely gashed its bottom with her ax. Apparently this finished her set task, for she leaned on the ax-helve, panting.

Gene wriggled in his seat.

"What's it all about?" he asked delightedly.

"Pete's squaw's a mite irritated this mornin'," said Tom unemotionally. "She busts up the furniture with an ax about every so often——"

Gene made as if to leap over the wheel, but Tom caught his arm.

"Hey, where you goin'?" he demanded.

"Maybe she's not through. I'm going to help her," said Gene gleefully.

"Young feller," said Tom solemnly, "you set where you be. She'd as soon sink that ax into you as that there tub. If you was to venture into Checkerberry, you wouldn't never come out agin."

Gene gazed longingly at the house.

"I wonder," he said slowly. "I wonder——"

Tom clucked to the horses, not releasing his hold upon Gene, and they drove onward, to the boy's manifest disgust. Again and again he reverted to Checkerberry during the remainder of the ride, but Tom, reading the warning signals, was either non-committal or went out of his way to belittle the dangerous attractions of the settlement. He wished devoutly he had taken the other road now, but hoped for the best.

It was just before first luncheon when they drove up to the permanent camp at the foot of the sluice where the lake flows into the river, and Gene, by way of introducing himself to the environment, insisted upon eating his pie first.

"Young feller," said Tom, "I'm a-goin' to put you on the head-works out in the lake. Kin you swim?"

"Like a fish."

"Huh! If you couldn't, I'd send out a cot and make you sleep there."

"What's a head-works?" asked Gene curiously.

"Contraption for towin' booms across the lake. Kind of a windlass. You run it out and anchor it, and then haul the boom up by man-power, and then you move the head-works along agin and anchor, and kind of work the boom acrost where you want it."

"Doesn't sound exciting," said Gene.

"There's nothin' excitin' about river-drivin'," said Tom, and believed what he said. "And, say," he added, "if you run onto any dynamite a-layin' round, jest leave it be. If you monkey with it, and they's anything left of you, and I find what's left, I calc'late to everlastin'ly thrash the day-lights out of it. You hear that?"

Gene was quiescent for two days, owing, doubtless, to interest in new surroundings. It is true that he was narrowly prevented from an attempt to shoot the sluice and the rips below it in a canoe which Tom kept for errand-boy purposes on the lake, and that Pierre, the cookee, pursued him with a whetted carving-knife because of a handful of the shorter quills of a porcupine placed cunningly in his shoes; but these and other minor events were insignificant in comparison to Tom's anxieties.

But Tom would have been more anxious had he been aware of Gene's burning interest in Checkerberry and its inhabitants. The place fascinated Gene; it exerted a lure over his facile imagination; he endowed the squalid settlement with the glamour of romance and adventure. Whenever Tom was out of ear-shot, he cross-examined his companions, extracting from them every crumb of information, authentic or apochryphal, which they possessed. Gene was the owner of one valuable attribute—it was tenacity. And, strangely enough, patience was another, once he had made up his mind to an accomplishment. He had resolved to acquire intimate, first-hand knowledge of Checkerberry.

AFTER supper on the third evening, Gene quietly disappeared down the river, crossing at the flume and taking the right bank, upon which side lay Checkerberry. This was a necessity, for, though the gates were closed at night, holding in reserve the waters of the lake for the next day's driving, the river was not to be crossed for a distance of five miles and until one came to the main road and the bridge. It was a turbulent, hungry, lashing river in early springtime, rushing feverishly between its high banks of stone, throwing itself headlong down rocky, narrow, inclined gorges, tearing mercilessly at jutting headlands and skilfully placed wings.

It was a good four miles to Checkerberry, not all of it upon dry highlands. Marshes intervened, deep with the water of lately melted snow, thick with underbrush, difficult to traverse. But these impediments served only to give zest to the project. Gene loved opposition. Difficulties were his joy. He floundered and staggered and plunged onward, swinging toward the right at the wicked jaws of Checkerberry Rips and mounting the ridge toward the clearings which were Checkerberry.

From time to time, through openings in the trees, he caught glimpses of the distant mountain rearing its guardian head over the forest—a head crowned, like Lombardy of old, with an iron crown where, day and night, the sleepless eyes of wardens scrutinized the limitless roof of black-green for ominous smoke of incipient forest fire. The moon, large and gracious, began its upward climb.

Snatches of ribald, drunken song reached his ears, and the blinking lights from ill-cleansed lamp-chimneys glowed through dirty windows. Checkerberry squatted at his feet.

He approached softly now, spying out the country. From the apex of a huge boulder he studied the lay of the land, then slid downward to hit upon his feet with a crash startlingly loud in the solitude. At his very ear sounded a frightened cry.

Gene leaped sidewise and turned, ready for action. His heart bounded, not with fear but with a queer elation. The thing was happening according to his highest desires. But there was no one to fight. Crouching under a shelf of rock, holding her clutched hand tightly to her lips, was a woman. He could not distinguish her features or guess at her age, but he was conscious of a hope that she was young and even lovely.

"Don't be frightened," he said.

There was no answer, but out of the shadow apprehensive eyes stared up at his big young figure, made to appear huge by the moonshine and shadows. He laughed softly.

"You mustn't be frightened," he said.

"Who are you?" came in a faint whisper.

"Gene Tabor, ma'am, such as I am."

"What are you doing here?"

"Taking a moonlight stroll through the woods. And who are you?"

"Are you young or old?" she asked, strangely enough.

"Young. I'm a mere child," said Gene gaily. "Who are you?" he repeated.

"I'm Rosina."

"Are you young or old?" he asked laughingly.

"Young—young. Oh, I'm young! If I were only old—old and hideous!"

Something in her voice arrested him, impressed him. It was a soft voice, a youthful voice to be capable of expressing such dark emotion. He bent over her.

"I can't see you," he complained.

"I wish nobody could see me—ever again."

"Do you live there?" He swept his arm toward Checkerberry.

"Yes."

"You're one of *them?*"

"I belong to them. They own me. I'm a Slade."

"I'm going to look at you," he said, with sudden decision. "Turn your face up to the moon."

Instead, she covered it with her hands and crouched lower in the shadows.

His actions became instinctive. He bent over her and drew her hands away gently and gently tilted her face upward. It is strange, but, impertinent as his motions were, there was nothing of impertinence in them, nothing but youthful naturalness, impulsiveness. She was not offended, and, in an instant, looked up into his face. He stared.

"You're—lovely!" he said breathlessly.

"I know it," she said unexpectedly.

'What are you doing here?"

"Praying to die," she said.

HER words silenced him, shocked him, abashed the buoyant spirit of adventure in him. Praying to die! For the first time in his life—his careless, debonair life—he was face to face with reality, with agony.

"Why do you pray to die?" he asked. He could not comprehend the wish for death.

"Because, when you are dead, nothing can happen to you. Nobody can hurt the dead. It doesn't matter how wicked a person is; he can't harm the dead. If you die *good*, you will always be good."

Here was a strange philosophy, a strange hopefulness! Gene pondered it. A desire for goodness so strong that it could long to have that goodness preserved by death! He had thought little of virtue or evil. Now he thought of them briefly, sharply, clearly.

"Why can't you be good—and live?" he asked.

"Because the living are helpless."

"Who are you?" he asked again.

"Rosina Slade. I belong to the Slades. They can buy and sell me—like a keg of whisky. Last night I heard Jake Slade offer to play a hundred dollars and his team against me. And Pete knocked him down. But Pete didn't need the team. I belong to Pete."

"The mayor of Checkerberry?"

"They call me the mayoress," she said.

"You're his wife?"

"No."

Gene swore under his breath.

"Tell me," he said savagely.

"He just owns me. He's saving me—for himself. He won't let anybody else look at me. He's saving me, but— Oh, I can tell—it must end soon."

"You mean——"

She explained patiently.

"Old Tom Slade took my mother. She was a school-teacher over yonder. He took her and brought her here—and finally killed her. Not with his hands. He's dead now. Mother taught me until she died. That's how I know there is such a thing as goodness. Then Pete Slade took me. He said I was too pretty for anybody else and he would bring me up, and when I was old enough— I'm old enough," she said, and stopped suddenly.

"How old?"

"Eighteen."

"And—" Gene hesitated.

"It would have been all over—but for Hattie—long before this. And maybe I'd have died."

"Hattie?"

"Pete's squaw," she said baldly, but with no appreciation of the baldness of her words. "I think Pete is afraid of her. She won't let him have me—and he daren't get rid of her. But he *will* dare—in spite of her. Some day, when he's crazy with drink——"

"God!" said Gene.

"And that," she said simply, "is why I prayed to die."

"Is there danger to-night—now?"

She shook her head.

"I don't think so. Maybe to-morrow. Maybe in a week. Maybe not for months. As long as Hattie keeps about, I'm safe. She watches."

He scrutinized her face again.

"You are lovely," he said in a tone different from that in which he had made the statement the first time. He paused again, then leaned over and touched her cheek gently with his fingers. "By God, he sha'n't have you!"

"He will," she replied.

"I think," said Gene quietly, but those who knew him would have recognized how finally he had made up his mind, "I shall take you myself."

She drew away from him and shivered.

"You don't understand," he hastened to say. "I am Gene Tabor. Maybe I'm not much, but, anyhow, I'm decent and clean. I wouldn't harm you. As God sees me, I wouldn't harm you! I—I would love you," he said, uttering the word for the first time in his life with the ease of spontaneous sincerity and an impulsive lack of self-consciousness. "I would be good to you—and you could be as good as you liked. Why," he said, startled, "I never saw you before, did I?"

"Never."

"But what I say is the truth. I know it." He said this as much to reassure himself as to assure her. He knew it to be a fact, and it astonished him. It gladdened him. "I'll take you away from them," he said, "and you will be my wife."

She was very still, gazing at him with such childish intensity, such womanly childish intensity that his heart stood still.

"I think I believe you," she said. Then, after a pause: "There really are good men. Mother said there were."

He touched her hair.

"The world is full of them. Almost all men are good. There are only a few Slades. Will you go with me?"

"I don't know—I think so."

"Do you love me?" he asked boyishly.

"Why," said she, "how should I? I trust you," she added, as if that sufficed.

"Will you go with me now?"

"No."

"Why?"

"They would kill you."

His eyes lighted. Here was opposition, a threat. He laughed.

"I must go back," she said dully, "back."

"No!"

"He will come looking for me. I want to get there first—where there is light." She got to her feet and began to move away.

"Will you come here again to-morrow night?"

She paused, turned her face to him, and stood lost in thought.

"No," she said; "you mustn't come here. Never again. They would kill you."

"I shall be here to-morrow night—at the same hour."

"No!"

"I shall be here," he said, and stood watching her until her slender form passed from view, traveling toward the dim lights of Pete Slade's shanty in Checkerberry.

NEXT night he returned, but Rosina did not appear. She was there, but he did not see her, though he waited long. She wondered if he would come again.

The third night he came, and Rosina awaited him. She did not wait for a greeting, but said steadily when he faced her:

"I have thought. I will go with you, but not now. When it is necessary—it will be soon."

"You love me?"

"I trust you," she said a second time, and hot-headed as he was, impatient, impulsive, somehow he was satisfied.

Presently she spoke again.

"I can't stay." She gave him her hand, though he longed for her lips. "I will come every night. If a night comes when I am not here, it means I shall never come again—unless you fetch me."

"Unless I fetch you?"

"Out of Checkerberry. If I don't come, it will be because I can't. Only one thing can prevent me."

"Nothing," said Gene, "can stop me from coming for you."

"Good-night," she said softly; and then, "I think I am going to love you."

Gene wallowed his way back to the sluice through swamp and backwater, through spruce thicket and over hardwood ridge where the spruces shone a luminous, ghostly silver in the moonlight. His mind was busy; his heart was elated. He was not aware that the black figure of a man followed him with infinite skill and woodcraft—the black figure of a man which had lurked behind the great boulder where he met Rosina. Nor was he aware how the same stealthy shape had followed him the night before, and the night before, and even on the night of the first meeting.

Four days passed. But one more boom remained to be worked across the lake from the sluice, and the beginning of the week would see the rear of the drive on its way down the river. Gene wondered what he should do then. It was a problem he did not have to solve, for that night Rosina did not come to the rock.

Gene felt a curious wave of exultation; he was called to action and to danger. Rosina waited there, where the dim light twinkled, in peril, praying, it might be, for his coming. It was a wonderful thought that he, and he alone, was her hope. Of all the earth's millions of men, she looked to him and none other.

He threw back his reckless head and would have laughed gaily, but reason forbade. To-night he must be wary and skilful, brave and dependable. Upon his own arm and his own courage and his own brain depended the life of Rosina Slade—and he gloried in the thought. If only he could have fought Pete Slade fist to fist or ax to ax for her! With her to sit by and see the prowess of her champion! He quelled the imaginings of romantic youth, and, after a brief study of the terrain, advanced cautiously in the shadows of the forest to the edge of Pete Slade's clearing.

From the shelter of a boulder in the pasture he scrutinized the shanty at closer range. It glowed with an unaccustomed number of lights, but no human being was visible within. Stealthily he crawled nearer. Three men lounged not distant from the corner of the house, and a fourth, who loomed huge under the light of the waning moon, prowled up and down with panther steps. Instinct told Gene this was Pete Slade.

One of the three was evidently a new arrival, for the situation was being made clear to him to an accompaniment of subdued, drunken chuckles.

"I allus said Pete 'ud git his comeuppance from that squaw," said the man, with evident relish.

"Since mornin' she's held Pete off. Shet out of his own house and home. My Gawd, but hain't he savage! And with his own gun." The narrator paused to laugh softly and derisively. "The ol' she devil's a-squattin' in there some'eres with Pete's gun, and the door's barred, and Pete's been a-prowlin' round in the cool of the evenin' a-cussin' and a-threatenin', and a-wonderin' what he's a-goin' to do about it."

"If Pete gits drunk enough the' hain't no squaw nor no gun kin keep him out."

"He's a-workin' out strategy now," chuckled one of the three. "Dade and me's reenforcements-like, and so be you. Seems like four men ought to git the best of a squaw and a gal."

Then Rosina was safe! Gene scrutinized the situation. He crept to the back, close to the sagging, unpainted clapboards, and peered through a window. No one was visible. He pressed his face against the window-pane; then with a finger-nail he scratched lightly on the sill. Instantly the barrel of a rifle swung into view. That was all, but it assured him vigilant watch was being kept. He scratched again, paused, and scratched twice—hoping the sound would be recognized as a signal, as an attempt at communication. A face, brown and indistinguishable, framed frowsily in straggling black hair, pushed itself into the opening of a doorway, and beady eyes stared unwaveringly. Gene scratched again. The head disappeared; he heard the sound of a brief scuffle, and Rosina, her skirt held by a chocolate talon, came toward him. He saw her turn her head to expostulate; then she came toward him.

"Who is there?" she asked softly.

"Gene Tabor—let me in."

Rosina disappeared an instant; he heard a bolt slide all but noiselessly, and the back door stood ajar. Gene entered quickly, closed the door behind him and bolted it. He faced Rosina.

"You came," she said.

"You knew I would."

"I knew," she said, and there was that in her eyes which made it right and good for him to take her for the first time into his arms and to hold her as his own.

She led him into the adjoining room, a sort of pantry, shielded from the view of watchful eyes without.

"Hattie, he came—I knew he would come," she said to the squaw, who squatted on the floor, rifle across her knees.

The woman grunted.

"Ax," she said.

Gene understood. The ax was to be his weapon.

He sat on the floor beside the two women, and Rosina's hand, obeying a homing impulse, crept into his hand—and so they waited, not speaking. The waiting, the inaction irked Gene. It was not his way to wait for assault, but to deliver the first blow—to take some initiative.

"We could creep out the back door," he whispered.

"No," said the squaw. "Man there. Man in front. Man all sides. I hear."

APPARENTLY Pete Slade had elaborated his plan; but Gene was given no time to consider this, for a rock crashed against the front door. Almost at the same moment the back door splintered under a like impact.

"Back door—you," said Hattie.

The back door hung from an upper hinge; the bolt lay upon the floor. As Gene made himself ready, there came a tremendous clamor and shouting at the front, and he heard Hattie's rifle speak. The clamor continued. Then, under cover of the sound, Gene distinguished a movement without. It was not so much his ears which caught the sound as some added sense, some instinct. He comprehended. The plan was to rush the back door while the attention of the squaw was focused on the rumpus in front.

Gene smiled. He took his station close to the door, the ax swinging idly in his left hand. The door moved slowly, any sound it caused swallowed up in the cursing and banging at the other side of the house. Gene balanced on the balls of his feet. A bearded chin protruded through the opening in the door and Gene struck, not with the ax but with his free fist—struck powerfully, gaily. He could restrain himself no longer. Above the din rose his boyish, vivid laugh—his battle-cry.

"Keep coming! Keep coming!" he shouted, with the gladness of battle in his voice.

Instant silence came. It was as if the sound had issued like water from a pipe and some one suddenly had turned off the faucet. The felled man disappeared, dragged out by unseen hands.

"Who's there?" bellowed a voice.

"Come and see!" Gene called back joyously.

"We'll come. Hey, Jake, roust out Pazzt and Tim and Whiskers. Git 'em all if they're sober enough to walk. Roust out everybody. This hain't private no longer." Gene knew it was Pete Slade speaking.

"Fool!" snarled the squaw. "They bring everybody now. They kill."

Running feet could be heard; the clan was being gathered.

"We'll make it somehow," Gene said to Rosina.

Then there intervened a sudden flare of light, a lurid, upleaping, frolicking yellowness, which danced through the windows, which threw into sharp distinctness what had been a curtain of blackness without. A shout of consternation rose.

"Fire! Haystack's afire!" Then running feet.

The squaw struggled to her feet and stood tense, poised for action. Gene was irresolute, doubtful if this were an intervention of heaven in their behalf or subtle stratagem of the enemy. Then a voice, a familiar voice, spoke sharply.

"Git them wimmin out, you young fool! Git a waggle on to you. Think I'm firin' Slade's haystacks jest fer fun?"

Gene crouched, suspicious.

"Is that you, Tom Dowd?"

"It's me, consarn ye! Move!"

Gene pushed the squaw toward the door and followed, urging Rosina by the hand.

"It's Tom," he said unbelievingly. "It's all right. It's Tom."

"Foller me, and be quick. Dog-gone that light! We got to git acrost the pasture before they diskiver us. Run, if ye kin."

They ran blindly, following Tom as he leaped away before them. There was no time for words, no need for words. That open space must be traversed before even speculative safety was achieved. Fifty yards—seventy-five yards they floundered unobserved. Then rose a shout:

"There they go—acrost the pasture!"

Now it was a matter of speed, and with two women, encumbered by skirts, the advantage was all with the pursuers.

"Stick clost to me!" panted Tom.

GENE was aware that they ran straight toward the river, and vaguely wondered at Tom's folly. They would be trapped in the bend. Checkerberry Rips, with its wicked, hungry jaws, was directly in their path. He would have protested, but he had no breath to spare. His powers must be husbanded, for Rosina was tiring, and he must exert himself for two. He snatched her up in his arms and ran on.

Down-hill they plunged, and their pursuers were at the crest, Pete Slade's bull voice leading the hue and cry not fifty yards in the rear. Now they were upon the very point, the bare granite jaw of the rips, thirty feet above the downrush of the pent-up stream which squeezed between the jaws there and dived headlong to a lower level. It was the end, the spot for the last stand, so thought Gene to himself. He kissed Rosina breathlessly.

"Gimme the gal!" panted Tom, and Gene felt Rosina snatched from his arms; and then, still running, Tom seemed to walk upon air, to poise in flight directly over the middle of the flood. He heard a clatter. The squaw, scrambling down the rock, had dropped her rifle into the churning river.

Tom and Rosina were across—by some bewildering magic they had crossed the rips in an instant. The squaw followed them. Gene's bewilderment lasted but a twinkling. His straining eyes saw the way of escape prepared by Tom Dowd, a river-man's bridge. From jaw to jaw of the rips stretched a slender pencil of blackness, seemingly of not more than the breadth of a hand—felled spruce, rounded, treacherous, but safe as the floor of a house to such practised feet as Tom Dowd's.

Tom had foreseen the need and had made ready the way to safety. Gene's feet were upon the log. As he stepped off at the opposite side of the jaws, Pete Slade leaped upon the other end of the log. Gene hesitated. It would be a matter of ease to lift the log end—to roll it over the brink, closing the passage—but Pete Slade was *alone!* The others were in the rear.

Gene straightened up and laughed softly.

"Come on, Pete; come on," he said to himself happily—and Pete was there!

Gene struck the man as he left the log, and Slade sprawled upon the granite.

"Lay there a second!" Gene shouted, as he stooped and dropped the log's end into the torrent, closing the passage, leaving those tardy enemies futile on the opposite bank. He was alone with Pete Slade!

"Gene!" called Tom from a distance.

"Run along!" Gene called back. "I'll be coming."

Slade was on his feet again, savage with smuggled whisky, insane with the animal rage of a man who had never known restraints—and there, on the rolling top of that granite pinnacle, with the black, venomously hissing flood watching and hungering at their feet, the two met breast to breast. In the heart of one resided the blackness of bestiality; in the heart of the other glowed something that is the essence of youth, that is at the root of manhood, that brought chivalry into being, and that at its highest lifts men almost into worthiness to mate with women.

Pete Slade fought to kill; Gene Tabor fought to punish. He could not have expressed the thing in words, but the thing was there, not a somber virtue, as some would see all virtues, but a debonair, a laughing virtue; and it is past doubting that God, in his wisdom, prefers to the dour man of perfection the less infallible man who looks with eyes unafraid and lightens the murk of the universe with a laugh.

There was no rage in Gene—only a profound gladness, a joyful appreciation of the fitness of the moment. This was happening as it should happen, for Rosina and for him. When he had done with Pete Slade, he could go to her with a glad heart, conscious of obligation fulfilled. He owed this to her; he owed this to womanhood.

He heard a little cry. Indistinctly he heard Tom Dowd's vioce say sharply:

"Shet up! He's busy. Don't distract him." Then, in the panting and struggle and scuffling and thud of blow, he fancied he heard: "You're seein' a man made. 'Tain't fer you to stop. It's got to finish. He's goin' to be your man, hain't he? Wouldn't lift a finger to help nor hinder. He'll never have to fight ag'in."

NEVER have to fight again! Somehow, Gene understood that. It was true; but he did not know why it was true. As he beat down his enemy, he pondered it in the back of his mind. After this, he would not be the same. It was as if he had been constructed for a definite purpose, and, having accomplished it, would be inducted into his reward. He had been a boy, on trial—plastic and formative. Henceforward he would be a man, and he thrilled with pride at the thought. He would be a man, recognized by men as a man.

Suddenly he was aware that he was unopposed. There no longer was a beast to fight. It grieved him an instant that the thing was so soon ended—though it had not been soon ended. Then, in a last dying outburst of irresponsible boyhood, he stooped, lifted the battered body of Pete Slade above his head and held the man outward over the torrent.

"Beg!" he cried in the voice of victory. "Beg; crawl to her and beg, or I'll drop you!"

But, suddenly as he had lifted Pete, he placed the man again on the granite.

"No," he said. "You can't beg—you can't smirch her even by begging of her. You don't exist, Slade. You never existed. It was a thing that couldn't *be*."

He turned from the man to approach Rosina.

"Now," he said, "we'll never be sorry. I know."

"I—I think I understand," she said softly.

Willie Takes the Roses

A Novelette Complete in This Issue

There's a Hero and a Heroine, of Course, but This Story Is Mostly Laughs. The Man Who Wrote It Is Better Than Most at Building Up Humorous Situations

By Courtney Ryley Cooper

Illustration by J. Conacher

IN THE language of the after-dinner speaker, it is only meet that the career of Willie be briefly sketched, that those who aspire to one great thing in a lifetime may profit or lose by the telling thereof. Willie started in life under the handicap of being only an egg.

There are those who, in the common, or slang, parlance, become eggs. Willie didn't become. He was. Nor was he an ordinary three-minute or hard-boiled affair. He started by being a six-week egg—and lived it down. Or came out of it, whatever way you want to put it. Which causes the explanation that, following his period of eggdom, he became what the Encyclopædia Britannica ponderously describes as follows:

> OSTRICH (O. Eng. Estridge; Fr. Autruche; Span. Avestrung; Lat. Avis Struthio): the *Struthio camelus* of Linnæus, and the largest of living birds, standing nearly eight feet high and weighing nearly three hundred pounds. The genus *Struthio* forms the type of Ratite birds, characterized chiefly by large size, breast-bone without a keel, strong running legs, rudimentary wings and simple feathers.

It would have been very easy to have stated also that the breast-bone of an ostrich isn't the only thing that's not balanced on a keel—that it may possess strong running legs but a weak brain, that its thoughts as well as its wings are rudimentary, and that what passes as a mentality is as simple as its feathers. Which leads further into the life and works of Willie, and the fact that he was an ostrich among ostriches. Also, that some one on the lot of the Paradox Motion Picture Company possessed a deal of patience—even to the extent of breeding within Willie's brain that rare and curious thing known as a thought.

A motion-picture director can think of almost anything—one on the Paradox lot did almost that very thing shortly after the time when Willie, youthful and barely possessed of his first collection of plumes, had ceased to form the background of an Egyptian-vamp picture for which he had been purchased, and began to wander about the studio grounds in an aimless search for something by which to fill in time and his gizzard. The idea was to the effect that Willie would be funny in a comedy. Whereupon the director called a mournful-visaged person, once christened with a regular name, but now known only under the general or collective title of "Props."

"Think you could pound anything into this ostrich's head?" he queried.

Props cocked his flour-cap at a more acute angle and stared at the sky.

"Might with a meat-ax," came finally. "But, listen; I ain't got last week's salary for just being Props. I don't see why I should take on no extra job."

"Wait until we sell that last picture, will you?" came with a snort. "How can you expect the company to pay salaries until it sells its films? Now, listen; this is a scream, a knock-out, a killer—see? We'll have the villain make his escape in an air-plane. Cut to the desert——"

"What desert?"

"*The* desert. The only one we've got—what Miss Mayberry used in 'Her Egyptian Lover.' Now, Willie's wandering around, looking for an oasis. Close-up of Willie——"

"Looking for the oasis?"

"Yeh. Long shot—air-plane in distance. Close-up—villain in air-plane——"

"Looking for the same oasis?"

"No; at his gage. Gas is getting low. Long shot of second air-plane in pursuit; then a close-up showing their gas is getting low, too. Then close foreground, showing the first air-plane landing and Willie looking at the villain. It's the first human being he's ever seen."

"How's the audience know that?"

"Got to take it for granted. So he makes one jump and starts after him. See? Pursuers in the other air-plane are about to give up hope when they see the ostrich catch the villain and hold him until they come up. See? Something new—novel! Never been done before—knock-out!"

"Uh-huh." Props moved sadly away in the direction of Willie. "All I've got to do is teach him the trick. And him with not enough brains to drape a gnat's eyelash!"

WHICH brings the history of Willie to the turning-point of his career and a month of hard training. The mind of any man named Props round a motion-picture lot is a fertile affair. An hour later, Willie loped hungrily in the direction of a glittering mirror held in the hand of the property man to find a surprise at the end of it. Props ran a few steps. Willie followed. Props swung about suddenly, displaying half an orange fastened to the back of his coat. Willie ate it greedily. It was the first of a series of lessons in which Willie slowly but securely gained this unalterable bit of knowledge:

When anybody runs, it means something to eat. Chase 'em and grab 'em by the back of the neck—there's always half an orange there.

It was the only bit of thought which ever had permeated the otherwise empty dome of the rudimentary Willie. Therefore it stuck with a gluelike fastness; a running form was an instant signal for Willie to lope in pursuit. Props, the beak of his flour-cap over one ear, came at last to that point of success when he was forced to place Willie in an enclosure to save him from contracting an athletic heart. Anything that moved faster than a walk— Props sought the director.

"Well, he's set."

'Who's set?"

"Willie—the ostrich."

"Ostrich? Set? Set for what?"

"Why that desert, villain-in-the-air-plane stunt. I've been working on him a month. The minute he sees anybody running, he'll take out after him like a bat from a belfry. You know—you told me to teach him it."

"Yeh," came vacantly; "but we've decided not to make the picture. The ship's sunk."

"The what's what?"

"The ship's sunk. Flivvered! 'Her Egyptian Lover' didn't sell. Stuff's off. No more picture-taking in this hick-town studio. Get me?" The director spread his hands. "The Paradox Film Company—ain't!"

"But—it owes me a month's wages!"

"That's nothing. It owes the star real borrowed money—to say nothing of every store in town."

The director moved wearily away. For a long moment Props stood in flour-capped thought.

"You tell the world," he announced finally, "this fillum company don't gyp me. I take Willie!"

A week later, Willie, his lower half, or quarters, or whatever you call them, screened behind a netting, gazed dolorously out upon strange surroundings. A hundred feet away was a line of elephants. Across the tent were the cages of lions, tigers, leopards and what-not, where Willie's sole owner and friend was busily at work in repayment to a small circus for the transportation of self and ostrich from the erstwhile lot of the Paradox Film Company out to the more stable picture-colonies of California.

IT WAS all very noisy and unpleasant and disconcerting. From the front entrance mobs of persons were flooding into the menagerie-tent, and Willie, a bit frightened, sleepy after a wakeful night on his first circus train, tucked his two-gill head under a wing and wheezed away in darkness for a half-hour, at last to untangle his neck to notice that the crowds were gone and that only two visitors were in the whole menagerie—a young man and a younger woman, who stood near the netting and who conversed with an air of interest, energy and vehemence. Willie moved closer—not that he understood what they were talking about, or cared—but because a sunbeam, glancing through the lacings of the canvas, rested upon a diamond on the girl's left hand, causing it to glitter and sparkle, and causing also strange gastronomic yearnings within Willie's craw. All that glitters to an ostrich is food, whether it is digestible or not, and Willie's eyes centered, oblivious of everything else save the gleam of that diamond, just as the girl and man apparently were oblivious of him. The conversation went on.

"I insist, Letty, that I didn't follow you."

"Then how did you happen to know where I was going?"

"I didn't, I tell you. Other persons besides yourself came out to this circus. Besides, wasn't I friendly enough when I met you?"

"Yes; that's just it. I never can tell when you're going to blow up."

"Yes; and I'd like to know what you're doing wearing another man's ring!"

"Whose ring?"

"That's what I want to know!"

"Tom Jordan"—and, to Willie's disappointment, she allowed her ring hand to drop casually behind her—"I never heard of such a thing! How could that be any ring except yours?"

"I'd like to know the same thing." There was a strange note of interrogation in his voice. "Several things seem extremely strange about it. In the first place, why don't you let me see it if it's my ring? And what did you get so fussed for when I asked you about it?"

"I guess I've got a right to——"

"You haven't a right to wear somebody else's engagement-ring when you're engaged to me."

"Why, Tom Jordan!"

"It's the truth."

"It's not anything of the kind!"

"Then if it isn't, let's see that ring. I'm telling you that's not the one I gave you. The stone is a full carat smaller——"

"I guess I've exchanged the diamond then," came in youthful sarcasm, "and put a smaller one in there, and taken the difference in money. If that's the way you feel, and if that's how you accuse a girl that you're supposed to be in love with, I'll send your old ring back to you—to-night!"

"Why not now?" There was an icy accusation in the tone. She looked at him sharply—and still disappointed Willie by hiding that diamond. "Look here, Letty; all I want to know is whose ring you're wearing and what his name is. I——"

"It isn't a him at all!"

"Then let me see it."

"I won't. It's my ring. You gave it to me."

"Yes; but you just said I could have it again. Now, listen, Letty; there's no use of us quarreling over something if it isn't true. Just let me see if my initials are on the inside of that ring. If they are, I'll apologize. Only——"

A slight appearance of fright came into her eyes as he reached quickly about her and caught her hand. Hurriedly she glanced over her shoulder for a sweeping view of the menagerie. Only Props was in sight, apparently busy at the monkey-cages. Again the girl turned toward her *fiancé*.

"Don't do that, Tom! Hear me!" she whispered excitedly. "If you try to take that ring off, I'll—I'll throw it away."

"Why?"

"Just because—you're insulting me. That's why."

"Then who does it belong to?"

"Why, to me!"

"But who gave it to you."

"You know—you did."

"I didn't anything of the kind. Now, Letty——"

"Don't you do that, Tom. Honest, I'll throw it away! I'll—I'll—there!"

Then came a slight scream; two persons stood staring wide-eyed, and Props took his cue to move forward from the monkey-cages. The girl had kept her word—tossed the ring straight toward the bedding of straw which lay against the ostrich-enclosure—and Willie had swooped forward. Now he stood erect and gulping, a far-away appearance in his gaze.

A quaver came into the girl's voice.

"Now—now look what you've done!" she accused quickly. "He's swallowed it."

"I?" Tom Jordan stared at her in outraged innocence. "I? Yes; that's the way—I did it! I suppose I threw it to him! I think you did it on purpose to hide some evidence."

"Why, Tom Jordan!"

"Well, it's a funny thing that you should have thrown it right at him, when you know, or ought to know, that an ostrich will eat any thing that glitters. Looks to me——"

But she had drawn up proudly, eyes flashing with an idea. The ring was gone—there was no way in which a statement could be controverted.

"Tom Jordan, I'd be ashamed of myself! And to think I was going to marry you! I'm glad I found you out. I'm glad to know what a jealous, faultfinding, unfair person you can be before I married you. That was your ring!"

"Then, why——"

"Why? Because you accused me; that's why! Don't you think I have any pride? Don't you think I have any honor? Do you think for one instant that I would even try to defend myself when you accused me of such a—such a heinous thing as—as wearing another man's ring? Why—why—" She whimpered slightly, and the man's features underwent a sudden change.

"I'm sorry, Letty. Honest, I am. I—I just got a glance at it and the setting and everything else looked entirely different. I— But, there—we can get it back all right. I'll buy the ostrich and kill the thing and get the ring back."

"You don't think I'd ever wear it again, after this horrible episode? I should say not! Besides, you wouldn't be doing it to get me the ring again—you'd just want to see if it was your ring. I know——"

"Letty, that's not true! I told you I was sorry."

"Yes; you told me."

"You don't think I'd tell you a falsehood?"

"You accused *me* of telling one. I don't see that you're any better than I am!"

"Well"—and the *casus belli* reverted to its original status—"I don't think you've noticed me wearing other girls' rings!"

"Tom Jordan, I——"

Then she ceased hurriedly. Props had arrived.

"Thought I seen that ostrich swallow something here a minute ago," he announced. "Anything valuable?"

"Why——"

Tom Jordan moved forward, but the girlish figure of Letty Madison intervened.

"Oh, no; nothing at all," came with a very forced air of unconcern. "Only a bright piece of tin-foil."

Whereupon she turned to the man she had just announced as a falsifier, and winked, girl-fashion, with the entire side of a face. Tom Jordan waved a hand jauntily—in fact, his whole manner was as care-free and insouciant as that of a man about to be hanged.

"Nothing at all but tin-foil," he corroborated. It would never do for a low circus person to know. "Just happened to take it from a package of cigarettes and tossed it in his direction. Frightened Miss Madison when the ostrich dived for it—she thought it was something valuable. Are you sure that you've quite recovered from your fright, Miss Madison?"

"Oh, yes—yes; of course."

"Then, if you will allow me to escort you to your seat, I really must be going. I thought the man I expected to see would be out here—but he isn't. It's a matter of a contract. So, if I might escort you to your seat——"

"It isn't at all necessary."

Whereupon it was his turn to wink and indicate the figure of Props, now examining the neck of the ostrich. She turned slightly and held forth a hand.

"If you would be so kind."

THEY went on, her hand on his arm, until they reached the connection to the big show-tent, while Props watched after them with diligent interest. A lean hand jerked at the flour-cap, then trailed down his somewhat cadaverous features until it reached his chin. There it remained for a moment while Props gave utterance to a thought of much deliberation:

"Can't pull that stuff on me. They stand here for fifteen minutes making faces at each other, and then she slams this whatever-it-is at Willie and gets all excited when he eats it. It wasn't no tin-foil."

Whereupon he ceased his reveries. The well-dressed, clean-cut young Mr. Jordan was hurrying forth now from the connection and straight toward the ostrich-enclosure.

"How much you want for that bird?" he queried quickly.

'Sale or rent?"

"Sale—outright."

Props scratched his chin and jerked at his flour-cap.

'Depends on what you want to do with him," he fenced.

"Does it make any difference—after I've bought him?"

Props cocked his head.

"I'd sure have to know—it'd make a lot of difference in the price. I've raised this Willie ostrich pretty much as a pet. Besides that, he's a trained ostrich."

'I don't care about that. I'll give you a hundred dollars for him."

"A hundred dollars?" A certainty suddenly popped into the brain of Props that Willie had not swallowed tin-foil. "Ain't trying to kid somebody, are you?"

"Of course not. That's a good price. I can send over into Arizona and buy all the ostriches I want for fifty dollars apiece."

"Well, why don't you send, then?"

The jaw of Mr. Jordan dropped.

"Well—I don't want to wait. Anyway, I like the looks of this ostrich. I'll make it a hundred and fifty."

"Nope!" Props shook his head dolefully, and looked hard at the ground to conceal the glitter in his eyes. "Guess I don't want to sell at any cheap figure like that."

"Better think it—" Just then the young man turned and caught sight of a girlish figure at the connection. Listen here," he announced hastily; "I'll be back and talk to you about this to-night. I'll make it two-fifty though, right now, for a quick sale."

"Nope!" And Props stared harder than ever at the ground. Willie, to him, had ceased to be, as an ostrich. Suddenly, by one thrust of his bill, he had turned into a gold mine.

Everybody's Magazine, July, 1922

Mr. Jordan moved closer for an instant.

"Don't sell that ostrich until you've seen me!" he ordered, then hurried for the exit. Props looked after him with mournful blandness.

"That wasn't no tin-foil," came with more conviction than ever. "Don't sell Willie till I see him. Wonder what the deal is? Huh! Here *she* comes!"

AND, heading out from the connection, was the form of the girl. For a long moment she pretended to look at the various offerings of animals in the menagerie, then, at last, with a little perk of her head, turned toward the ostrich-enclosure, and stood a moment, in pretense of admiring the long-necked, ball-eyed figure of Willie. For a moment there was silence, while Props, his flour-cap slanted more than ever, awaited the inevitable. At last it came.

"This—this is the plume-bearing ostrich, isn't it?"

"Yessum." Props bobbed with a bow from the shoulders up. "Yessum; sacred Andalusian plume-bearer."

"I suppose plume-bearers are very valuable."

"So-so. Some is and some ain't."

Evidently she was in deep water. Props waited diligently. At last:

"Well, about what—what would you figure a good plume-bearer would be worth? I was reading the other night that a good many people were taking to raising——"

"Something along about—well, about like this one here?" Props waved a hand in the direction of Willie, and the young woman sighed, with something of relief.

"Yes; of course. I was thinking——"

"Well, a lot of 'em *are* buying 'em," lied Props. "Especially down here in this Southern country. Nothing to raising 'em—eat most anything. Just got to keep 'em out of the way of glass and stuff like that—they'll gobble down almost anything that glitters, whether it's good for their digestion or not."

"Yes—I—that is, so I've heard."

"But, of course, there ain't much to worry about that. As a general rule, they ain't much more trouble'n chickens or turkeys, except that they do eat more."

"And I suppose it would be terrible to have to kill one of them."

"Kill one?" Props slanted his head.

"To get the plumes? You don't have to do that. Just pull 'em out—hurts a little at the time, but an ostrich ain't got brains enough to know what it's about. Just wait till they get ripe and yank 'em out."

"I—I know. But I—I wasn't thinking about plumes. For—for instance, when an ostrich swallows anything, does he ever cough it up again?"

"Him? Nothing doing! I've cut open ostriches that had had things in their craw for eight years." Then, seeing that this was a fairly good piece of fiction, inasmuch as he never had met an ostrich before being introduced to Willie, Props went on: "Ostriches is funny. I've seen 'em with nails in 'em, pieces of bottle, even diamond rings!" There was a slight gasp. Props pulled at his flour-cap. " 'Course," he lied, "it's a pretty delicate operation. There's a lot in getting 'em ready for it."

"Operation?" A glint of hope came into her eyes. "Then you have performed operations on—ostriches?"

"Oh, yessum, hundreds of 'em."

"But suppose the ostrich dies?"

"Well"— and Props shrugged his shoulders—"sometimes that happens and sometimes it don't. 'Course, when it does, it's a big loss. Especially if it's a trained ostrich, like Willie here."

"But——"

"Now, of course I could get you a cheaper ostrich—if you're real set on having one. I could get you ostriches as cheap as thirty-five or forty dollars—but they'd just be ostriches. Willie here's been raised a pet. And, as I say, he's trained. He's an awful valuable ostrich. But I'm always in favor of doing what's right. Now, he's swallowed your ring——"

IT WAS the accusation direct. The young woman gasped.

"Oh, you saw——"

"And I know how you feel about it. But some way or other"—and the lean face of Props became more dolorous than ever—"I simply couldn't agree to let you take Willie without knowing what the consesequences would be. I can't sell him outright, anyway. There was a gentleman here this afternoon who's awful anxious to get hold of a good trained ostrich like Willie, and I promised I wouldn't do nothing about selling until I'd talked to him."

"A gentleman?" Miss Madison's face had gone white. "You don't mean the young man who——"

'Yessum."

'Oh! What—what did he offer?"

"Five hundred," lied Props.

"That much?" She hesitated. "It's a little more than I had wanted to pay—for an ostrich."

"Well, I wouldn't sell him for no low amount like that, anyhow. Of course it ain't none of my business, but I figure you ain't caring so much about Willie, anyway, as you are about what's inside him. That complicates things more'n ever. To get that ring back for you, I'd practically have to ruin Willie to do it. Nobody ain't ever so good again after an operation."

"Then you could——"

"Oh, yessum, I could. But, as I say, it's a delicate thing, and then I might ruin Willie. Besides, I'd have to wait until I was sure the thing wasn't stuck somewheres in his throat and hadn't got down to his craw before I cut into him."

"You mean you couldn't operate right away?"

"That's just exactly it, lady. It'd take three weeks—and the circus train leaves to-night."

"Then you'd have to take him to a veterinary hospital until——"

"Me? And mix him up with a lot of strange diseases? No'm. You've got a chicken-yard or a barn or something out at your house, ain't you?"

"Why, there's a part of the garage. My father and mother are away with one of the cars on a motor-trip."

Props did a heel-and-toe movement. "One of the cars" meant that several were left in the garage. Several cars meant money. Props cleared his throat and turned toward Willie, appraising him in a businesslike manner.

"Well, lady," came with an air of finality, "that's the way she stands. Take it or leave it. The young gentleman wants Willie and wants him bad——"

"But you won't sell to him? Please!"

"Just as I say—he wants Willie. But five hundred dollars won't buy him—although he does act like he might raise the bid. Now, you want what's inside Willie, and don't care particular about the ostrich hisself. That's more to my liking, since

I've raised this bird as a pet. Now, as I say, it's risky. But I'll take a chance. Say I take Willie out to your garage and keep him there, feeding him the right and proper foods, to make sure that he gets that ring well down into his craw, for about three weeks. That'd be two-fifty a week and board for me'n the ostrich."

"Why, I never heard of such a thing!"

"Yessum. Then when I cut into him, that'd be two fifty more, making it a thousand——"

"It's outrageous!" The pretty features of Miss Letty Madison were blazing with indignation. Props looked at her mournfully.

"Yessum; it sure is, lady. But them's the figures. Willie's a trained ostrich——"

"Besides, he had no business to swallow that ring! If I should go to the police——"

"Glad you mentioned that, lady. They might be able to do something for you. But, of course"—he glanced sadly upward again—"there'd be the newspapers. They'd just eat up a thing like this. You see, them police never keep anything to themselves—specially if it's about society. Same thing about this veterinary hospital. First place, they'd say I couldn't perform no operation like that—when there ain't a man among 'em that's an expert on ostriches, like I am. Second place, somebody'd get next to what it was all about, and the first thing you know it'd be all over town. Out at your house, if you took Willie there, you could say it was just a fad to raise your own plumes. I'm just looking out for your own interests, lady."

"I think it's just plain blackmail!"

"Well"—and Props became more mournful than ever—"I hate to have you think that way, lady. But if you do—we'll just call the whole deal off. This young gentleman who wants Willie——"

The color swept suddenly from Miss Madison's face.

"Oh, if you put it that way——"

"Thanks, lady. I thought you'd see it sensible. Now, if you wouldn't mind letting me have about fifty bucks for a deposit and drayage charges and feed and the like of that and give me your address, I'll be out at your house any old time you say."

Again a hesitant wait. At last,

"I'd rather you'd get there after dark."

"Yessum, lady. Anything you say. Just ask for you?"

"Yes."

ALL of which began still another era in the progress of Willie. Late that night he clattered about a space in a big garage, plodded sleepily for a few minutes, pecked at the food which Props had left for him and then, ostrichlike, passed up entirely any conjectures regarding his whereabouts and jammed his head under a wing, only, a short time later, to extricate it, and with round, blinking eyes to stare into the gleam of a night-light centered upon him by two shadowy feminine figures.

"Now, look at that!" came in heated tones. "That's what you've gotten me into!"

"Letty! I don't see why you should accuse *me!*"

"Well, why not?" There was an evidence of tears in the voice. "It wouldn't have happened if you hadn't asked me to keep that ring."

"Of all the foolish things! You didn't have to try to tell Tom that it was your ring, and you didn't have to tell him it was mine."

"I had to tell him something."

"Well, that would have been easy enough. For instance, you could have just said that it belonged to a girl friend of yours—and made up a fictitious name. Then you could have gone ahead with the truth—that this girl had become engaged to a young man who was disliked by the girl's guardian, and who could be hurt by this guardian in a business way if he really wanted to do it—which he would, seeing that he would disapprove of the marriage. Then you could have gone on and told how your girl friend was afraid to keep the ring for fear the maid or some one might see it and tell the guardian, and that she didn't want to put it in a safe-deposit box, because then she'd never have a chance to look at it when she wanted to, so just gave it to you to keep until her *fiancé* could get his business in such shape that the guardian couldn't close in on his notes and things at the bank, and that you placed it in your jewel-box and put it on in a hurry, thinking it was your own ring. That would have been the whole truth, except for the names, and it should have satisfied him."

"Oh, yes, of course!" Letty's tones were icy. "And of course he wouldn't have recognized you as the girl, and himself as the banker-guardian, and Barry Tarleton as the man he didn't like! Goodness, Louise! Don't you see I had to protect you?"

The shadow addressed as "Louise" sighed.

"You're a dear for doing it, Letty. But couldn't you have told him something else—if the truth wouldn't help? I don't see, anyway, what he's got against Barry."

"He thinks you're so young, Louise."

"Young? I'm nearly twenty!"

"Well, that's young. I'm almost twenty-two."

"Then I should think you'd be old enough to have thought of some way out of this mess. I could have thought of a hundred."

"Then why don't you think of them now? Besides, you seem to forget that he wanted to see the inscription inside, and that Louise Morris and Letty Madison have the same initials."

"Then you could have said your uncle gave it to you for a birthday or something."

"Oh, yes! I've got so many uncles that would inscribe a ring: 'From B. T. to L. M. Mizpah and Eternal Love!' "

Louise Morris stood a moment in thought, staring hard at the awkward, gangling cause of all their trouble, still gawking and craning his neck in the direction of the blinding night-light. Suddenly she turned at a little shriek:

"Louise! I've got it!" Then, in a whisper: "Sh-h. We mustn't talk so loud. He sleeps over the end of the building."

"Who?"

"This awful person who owns the ostrich. I've solved the whole thing. All in the world I have to do is to give him a couple of hundred dollars and be sure that he gets himself and his ostrich out of town. Then I can write Tom a letter, tell him I've killed the ostrich, and send him back his ring, saying that I never want to see him again. Then"—pridefully—"he'll come crawling back to me on his knees."

"Fine! But how about *my* ring?"

"I never thought of that."

"No; of course not." Suddenly the eyes of Louise widened with a new vision. "What on earth is Barry going to say about all this?"

"Oh, you mustn't tell him!"

"I know I mustn't. That's just the trouble. It would look fine—wouldn't it?—for me casually to mention the fact that you had inadvertently fed his engagement-ring to an ostrich."

"Well"— and Letty Madison snapped out the light—"it does look terrible. I suppose I'll cry myself to sleep to-night. Poor old Tom; he thinks I've deceived him, and I—I—can't tell him anything different."

"Yes; but he was to blame for being jealous. Poor Barry's innocent. And what will he think?"

Whereupon, sniffling a bit, they placed their arms about each other's shoulders and left the garage, while Willie, still blinking from the effects of the night-light, thumped about his enclosure in ignorance of his position in the world. All that he really knew was that the cement floor was hard and hurt his feet—which, after all, is a good deal for an ostrich to know.

CERTAINLY he was in the dark as to the fact that he—or, rather, his craw—formed the spot about which the destinies of two love-affairs revolved, to say nothing of his own life. The plans of Props had been laid coldly and deliberately—three weeks of comfort at two hundred and fifty a week, and after that the murder of Willie for two hundred and fifty additional; an ostrich more or less meant nothing in Props' life. Four weeks, one thousand dollars, less an ostrich. Content with the knowledge, Props now was snoring in a room on the second floor of the garage, while Willie blinked wakefully below, raised a foot to free it from the pressure of the cement, tucked his head under a wing, attempted to sleep on one leg, fell, floundered, then, blinking again, started the whole performance at the beginning. It created noise. It even awakened the blissful Props. With the result that the next morning he pounded on the door of the rather rambling Madison home and demanded an interview.

"Sorry," he announced when at last he faced Letty Madison; "but we've got to make some other arrangements about Willie. That cement out in the barn hurts his feet. You've got an awful big lawn here, lady. Why couldn't we turn him out in it?"

"In the daytime?" Letty stared in distress. "Why, everybody in Christendom would be asking me questions."

"Maybe so. But Willie's got to have his rest."

"Would you have to do it in the daytime? It wouldn't be so bad at night."

Props jerked at his flour-cap.

"Well, I might bed him down heavy with straw for the day. But as soon as it comes dark, I'll have to turn him out. I'll watch him, lady—so that he don't run away or nothing."

"Yes—and please see that it's good and dark."

"Oh, yessum."

BACK to the garage went Props, to stand in contemplation of the wall-eyed Willie, then suddenly to yank off his flour-cap with the descent of an inspiration. That ostrich was worth a thousand dollars to a young woman just for the purpose of keeping him from the possession of a certain young man. Now, the question rose: How much would Willie be worth to this certain young man for the purpose of recovering him from the possession of this young woman? It was a condition of which Props had not thought before—when the young man's purchasing offer had been made, there was no intimation that the girl would want him. Besides, what was to interfere with renting Willie to the young lady for the stipulated three weeks at the stipulated two-fifty a week, and then delivering him f. o. b., one ostrich and contents, at the end of that time to the young man—provided the remuneration were sufficient? Somewhat dazed by the possibilities of his gold mine, Props moved out toward the kitchen entrance, where he asked a few discreet questions of the cook regarding the nice young man Miss Madison soon was to marry. After this he hurried to a telephone, and in a down-town bank-building a rather worried-appearing person answered the summons.

"This is the ostrich-man talking," came the voice over the wire.

"Yes—yes; of course! I went out to see you last night, but they said you'd gone. You saw my advertisement, then?"

"Sure!" Props had seen nothing. "That's why I called you up."

"Are you ready to take my offer?"

"Who? Me? When I've been offered fifteen hundred for him?"

"Fifteen what? By whom?"

Props didn't answer directly.

"But I couldn't sell him for a while, anyway. That's my agreement. I might later on."

"Who's paying you fifteen hundred?"

"Well, nobody yet. I ain't letting 'em. I want to find out what that ring's worth first."

"Ring? What ring? What do you know about any ring?"

"Oh, enough, I guess. Just thought I'd tell you where I was at, and what I was doing, seeing you and I had been dickering. Don't know what the street address is, but I'm staying in the garage at the Madison house. Guess you know where that is."

"Yes—yes; but——"

"Can't talk no business for a week or so, though— 'less you'd want to beat that fifteen hundred pretty considerable."

"Just a minute there, old man!" Tom Jordan had flared suddenly. "I could take this matter to the district attorney."

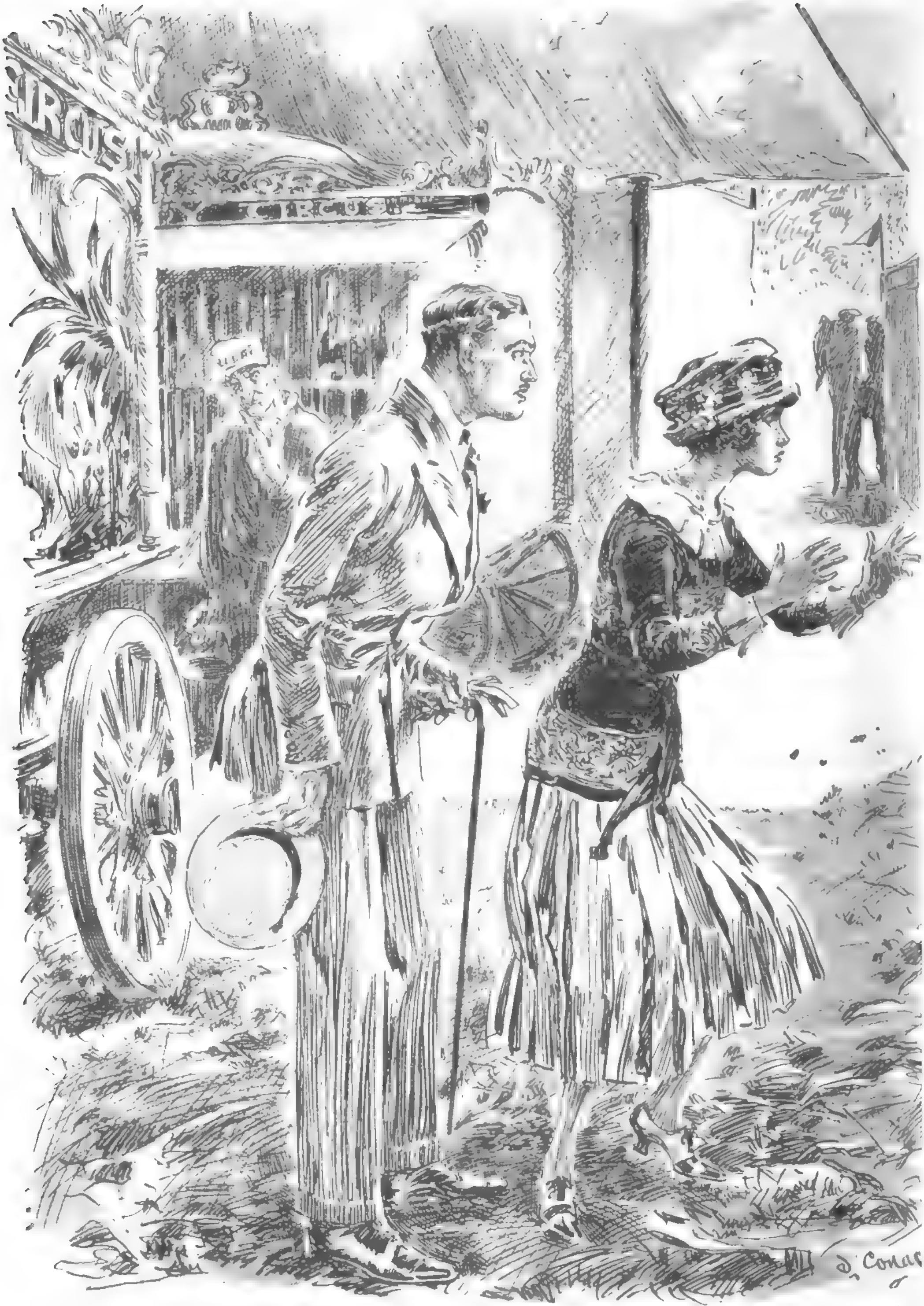
"Yeh; that's what I told the young lady that's hiring me, but she seemed to think that the newspapers could get a lot of laughs out of it the minute it got public."

"Ugh!" Jordan sank back from the telephone, then leaned close again. "Well, nobody wants that—not even you. We all want to find the easiest way out of this thing. A week or two's a pretty indefinite time. Besides, how would I know——"

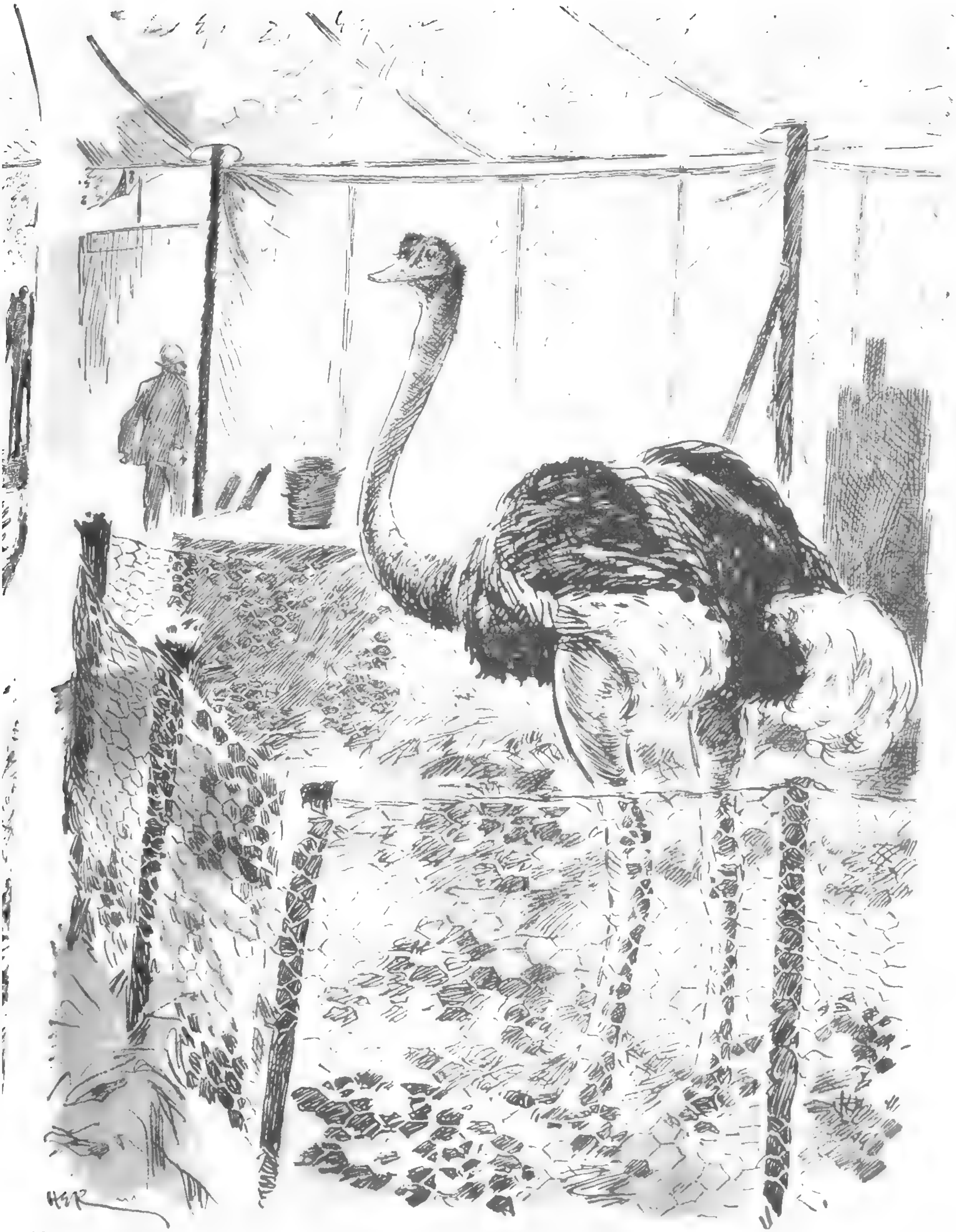
"Willie'd still have the ring? I don't make no deals, mister, without being on the level about 'em. If you buy Willie, you get all of him, including what's inside him. That's guaranteed."

"Then drop down and see me the first chance you get." Tom Jordan suddenly had resolved to go the limit. "We'll talk price when you get here."

"Yes, sir." Props winked sagely as he left the telephone. Forty-eight hours of waiting would do no one any harm—in fact, the suspense might aid considerably. So he wandered blissfully back to the garage, while down in the bank Tom Jordan called excitedly for the morning paper. With the threat of publicity, a vague fear had shot suddenly through him. He had failed to find Props the night before, and, following a sudden impulse, he had rushed a messenger to the want-ad counter of the morning paper to scatter a "blind want" through the various columns. Was there anything in


CIRCUS
CIRCUS
D. Conac

Now Willie stood erect and gulping, a far-away appearance in his gaze. A quaver came into



girl's voice. "Now—now look what you've done!" she accused quickly. "He's swallowed it."

that advertisement that could give a feature-seeking city editor a clue?

HASTILY he turned to the morning paper and scanned the want pages. It was there, in twenty places, in the "Business Chances," "Help Wanted," "Miscellaneous" and even in the "Lost and Found:"

REWARD—If man owning ostrich with World's Renowned Circus will communicate with the undersigned, he will learn something to his advantage. Address: DESIROUS, Box 410, *Herald*.

Tom Jordan breathed easier for a moment. The man had seen, and communicated direct, evidently having learned his name from some one at the circus. Now, if the advertisement in the afternoon paper were only as ambiguous——

Jordan wrinkled his brow and strove to think. Just to be thorough, he had written another ad for the *Evening Star* and, enclosing a five-dollar bill, had ordered it scattered, as in the *Herald*, through the want-ad columns. Also, if he remembered correctly, he had signed a bogus name to the letter, and had made the advertisement fully as vague as to its author. But—now that the fear of publicity was firmly planted in his brain—had he succeeded? Only the afternoon paper itself could tell, and that was a matter of hours. Jordan turned wearily back to his work, while out in her room Letty Madison turned, equally wearily, to a worried, red-eyed Louise Morris.

"Then the only thing I see for you to do is to have another one made. You could do that, Louise. I'd pay for it."

"How can I? When this one was made goodness only knows where in New York, and I can't tell the jeweler what that flowery design was on the setting and just what size the stone was? Anyway, don't you think there was any sentiment to it? Don't you think I care about having my original engagement-ring?"

"I can't see where there'd be any sentiment left to anything after it'd been inside an ostrich. But if you can't be reasonable, the only thing I see for you to do is to go away for a few weeks until——"

"Few weeks? Barry says I've got to show it to him this afternoon!"

"He? Then he's——"

"Of course!" Louise waved a hand excitedly, then sat blinking, letting the tears fall where they might. "He knows I haven't got it!"

"Barry?"

"Yes—Barry. Who else? He came by this morning and asked for the ring, saying he wanted to have it examined by his own jeweler to see if it was a perfect stone. I got so fussed that right away he knew something was wrong. I know he's thinking horrible things. Why, Letty, he actually accused me! Then he flounced out to do something terrible—I don't know what. He said he was coming back at five o'clock this afternoon and that he wanted to see that ring or—or—Letty, I've got to get that ring! I don't care what it costs——"

"How much have you got?" Letty straightened with interest.

"I—I don't know. I might be able to scare up a couple of hundred dollars."

"It wouldn't be a drop in the bucket."

"But you've got some——"

"That's just it. I haven't. Dad's check for the household and everything else doesn't get here until to-morrow, and I'll have to manage to scrimp two hundred and fifty out of that just for this—this thing's rent."

"But he might trust us."

"Yes"—it was a new vein of hope—"he might."

But, five minutes later, standing before the sore-footed Willie out in the garage, they learned that "he" wouldn't. Willie was too valuable a bird to be killed on time-payments. Disconsolate, they left the garage, to confer, to come to no conclusion, and finally,

"I don't see what you had to tell me this awful thing for in the middle of the night anyway," announced Louise Morris at parting. "If it hadn't been for that, I might have been able to think of a way out of everything, and Barry never would have known a thing about it. I haven't slept; my eyes are all red from crying—of course he'd know there was something wrong."

"That's right! Blame me."

Louise Morris stamped a foot.

"Oh, good-by!" she exclaimed.

"Good-by!" echoed Letty Madison, and swept into the house.

Time after time, and each time more petulantly as the day wore on, Thomas Jordan, vice-president by inheritance of the Home Banking and Trust Company, both in a private and official capacity, pushed the button for a sad-eyed subservient, to complain about this, that and the other thing, and at last to snap:

"And those Tarleton notes? I see six or eight of them have been taken up to-day."

"Oh, more than that, sir. We discounted fifty thousand of them just before noon to the First National."

"Discounted 'em? Who told you to discount 'em?"

"The cashier, sir. He seemed to think it was a good bet, seeing that we were a little short of money, sir."

"Oh—all right." It is not good business in a bank to use swear-words where the depositors can hear them. Besides, Tom Jordan, as vice-president, had no cause to explain a number of personal things about those notes and why he had wanted to hold them. Further, there was still another factor in ending the interview. A newsboy had just entered with the afternoon paper. Swiftly Tom opened it, examined his advertisement, approved of it as being wholly secretive, then started to fold the paper, only to stare suddenly at a few lines of type in the "Lost and Found" column:

> FOUND—On circus grounds this morning, lady's solitaire diamond ring. Owner can have same by identifying and paying reasonable reward.
> MRS. M. WEEDELL. Telephone, 1219-R.

Tom Jordan's hand shot out automatically for the extension-'phone. A minute later a whining voice was giving the particulars over the wire.

"You see, my little boy found it. Him and the other boys went over to the circus lot this morning to poke round—there's always a few nickels and such laying round where folks have lost 'em. Well, Eddie—that's my boy—was fooling round in the straw where the tent had been where they kept the animals, and he come across this ring——"

"Was it where the ostrich-enclosure had been?"

"Land! I couldn't tell you that, mister. He just said there was a lot of straw laying round. Did you say you could identify the ring?"

Sweating now with excitement, Tom Jordan sought for a lie—and found it.

"Well, I can and I can't. You see, it's my sister's ring and she left town last night. I'd say it was about a carat-and-a-half diamond, set in platinum, with a sort of flower design engraved in it——"

"And what's inside?"

"That's what I can't tell you—my sister forgot to say. Look here; what's that ring worth?"

"Oh, maybe five hundred dollars."

"Then I'll give you that as a cash bond as evidence of my honesty and a hundred dollars reward besides. That's fair enough, isn't it?"

"I guess it must be your ring. I live at 1618 Dripp Street. If——"

"I'll be right down!" Tom Jordan hooked up the receiver and mortally offended three depositors by knocking them away from the paying-tellers' windows as he went out of the bank. Willie had missed!

THIS much was almost certain: The ostrich had seen the ring go through the air and had dived for it as it struck, only to miss and perhaps to swallow a bit of chaff, while the ring itself had sunk to concealment beneath the straw. Willie had missed, and a solution of the mystery of another man's engagement-band was almost within Jordan's hands. Blankly he yapped for a taxi-cab and yelled his directions. Fifteen minutes later he was attempting vaguely to be calm, and casually to tell the curious Mrs. Weedell just how his sister lost her ring, and at the same time to read a deadly inscription:

From B. T. to L. M. Mizpah and Eternal Love.

It was a blow—so much of a blow that Tom Jordan wabbled out the door and into the taxi-cab with no idea of anything except——

"Back to the bank, sir?"

"No! Out to—no, never mind—just go anywhere. I don't care."

Whereupon he sank back and stared for an hour. Willie the ostrich had aimed, dived and missed. This was the ring. This—was—the—ring!

"Awful thing!" Tom gasped to himself at last, as he rocked drunkenly in the bumping, squeaking vehicle, "Engaged to me and loves another man!"

Whereupon he looked at the ring again. The inscription still was there.

"Who's B. T.?" He asked it with a sudden idea that he really should know. A long effort at thought brought no result. "Awful thing! Terrible—for a man to find out a condition like this——"

Then he sat bolt upright. What evidence did he possess? Here was a ring. It looked like the other ring. It had been found in the straw where the menagerie-tent of the circus had been, and evidently—but was it?

"Got to be fair about this," came in a mumble. "Got to be fair about it. Can't accuse a girl that I've loved of a—a heinous thing like this without knowing. It's a ring—got her initials in it. Every evidence—but I've got to get that ostrich!"

Back to the bank. Heavy thought. Then a quick shoot to the paying-teller's window and the cashing of a four-figure check. Following which came more thought and some more following that. It continued until the janitor swept him out.

THE problem went out with him and continued with him through evening, dinner and dusk. Then it crystallized into:

Tom Jordan was in possession of a ring. It appeared to be a ring which Letty Madison a day before had, in a moment of desperation, tossed from her finger toward a hungry ostrich. If it wasn't that ring, then Tom Jordan himself was suspicious, jealous and faultfinding. Only one thing could prove the genuineness or falsity of any conclusion. That was the craw of Willie. For if Willie possessed a diamond in his innards—that was something else again. And if he didn't possess a diamond——

There was only one thing to do. Tom did it. Darkness had come now, and for purposes best known to himself he hired a delivery-truck and accompanied it to the mouth of an alley a half-block from the Madison home. Then:

"Wait here. I'll be back in a minute."

He started down the alley, but in a near-by garage a light was burning. Jordan chose a darker path and skirted the block, finally to turn in among the shadows and soft grass adjacent to the Madison driveway and quietly start his course toward the garage. Props would be there, he knew. There was money in his pocket—and now was a time for action! Fifty feet—a hundred. Fifty more after that, and then— A voice from the veranda—a weak, frightened voice:

"Who's there?"

A gruffer one from close at hand:

'Yeh; who's there?"

Tom looked about him hastily, to find that he had strayed into a faint zone of light. Quickly he swerved and into the deeper shadows. A bush was near by, a prettily rounded bush, with a slim stalk and bushy, well-trimmed top—just large enough to hide behind. Again came the query, in more frightened tones, from the veranda. Another step, and Tom Jordan was behind the bush, to grasp it and hug close to it——

Then to gasp in a gulping, guttural fashion, and to stand for a moment dazedly trying to hold on to a bush—that would not be held to!. The thing had come to life; already a shadowy neck was uncurling from a half-raised wing and a clublike foot kicking viciously!

"Help!" That voice from the veranda again—Letty's voice!

"I'll get him, lady!"

The form of a man moving in the shadows. Tom Jordan whirled vaguely. He ran. And behind him——

For a moment the sleepy, blinking form of Willie the ostrich stood like a piece of triumphant statuary, wings half raised, one foot poised, neck half curled, bill open. Some one was running—a form was speeding away from him. Slowly, ponderously, in spite of its size, a one-ounce brain began to work. Then, with a squawk, he swept forward in blustering pursuit. His one and only trick! While behind him there echoed, shrill and excited,

"Go get him, W-i-l-l-i-e!"

Again a squawk, again a fluttering, wing-raised sally, while, panting and dodging, a white-faced, otherwise dignified young man strove to gain the street, and strove in vain. A second more and a feathery thing was upon him, to knock him down with the impact, to squawk and stumble about him, then to grasp him with his toothless bill by the back of the neck. But Tom Jordan knew nothing of the strength of an ostrich's beak. He squirmed, then remained still as two men rushed toward him.

"Go easy there, Butts, old boy!" It was the voice of Props. A second later Tom Jordan, with a queer, squeamish feeling, heard an answer from the butler:

"Oh, that's quite hall right. Hi've got my gun. Push away that bloody hostrich, hand we'll tyke 'im in the 'ouse."

"Alfred," whispered the man on the ground in a last vain attempt at escape, "don't do that! It's your old friend——"

"Hup there, hold top!" And Jordan saw the vague outlines of a revolver. " 'Ear me? Hup there!"

There was nothing else to do. A minute later:

"Tom Jordan! Tom Jordan! Why—" Then Letty Madison gasped and stood staring at him for a long moment. "What on earth do you mean by sneaking round this house at night——"

"Yes; and what do you mean"—Tom Jordan had jammed a hand into a pocket for his one bit of defense—"by wearing another man's ring?"

Out it came then. The eyes of Letty Madison went wide—then settled into a steady blinking. At last,

"I believe we'd better not discuss these matters before——"

"Very well. Alfred can go"—Tom Jordan waved a hand excitedly—"but this man stays. It may be necessary to take up certain things with him. I repeat my question: What do you mean——"

"Are you referring to that ring?" Letty Madison had become remarkably cool.

"Of course I'm referring——"

"Then, all I have to say is that you're mistaken. I never saw that ring before in my life!"

"You nev— You what? Do you mean to stand there and tell me that you——"

Cling-g-g-g-g-g-g! It was the telephone-bell. A moment later, Alfred the butler, red-faced and ruffled from his burglar chase, entered decorously.

"Telephone, Miss Madison."

"Very well; I'll be there in a moment. That's exactly what I mean to say."

"Then what became of the one you were wearing yesterday out at the circus?"

"Go out and ask the ostrich."

"Yes; and I say that the ostrich never swallowed it. I——"

"Telephone, Miss Madison."

"Very well, Alfred. I would like to know, Mr. Jordan, if you are a mind-reader or——"

"Sure that ostrich swallowed that there ring." Props jerked at his flour-cap and moved forward. "I seen him when he done it."

"You didn't see any more than I did!" Tom Jordan turned toward him vehemently.

Props, with a gold mine slipping between his fingers, made a last desperate attempt.

"Ask the lady, then!"

"Yes; and you don't know!" Tom, his collar crawling about one ear, whirled in an attempt at drama. "You——"

"I suppose"—sweetly—"you'd even doubt an X-ray."

"Ah! You've X-rayed him?"

"Well, I thought something of the ring you'd given me, even if you didn't."

"Then let me see the picture."

"Telephone, Miss Madison."

"Very well, Alfred." It was a welcome relief from a tight position. Letty moved superbly on, leaving the two men to stare after her.

THE quiet of the telephone-room was what she wanted. It gave a chance for thought, and for a long moment she stared at the wall, her brow wrinkled. Finally, as she picked up the receiver:

"I'll have to tell him the pictures are all locked up in the safe-deposit vault. That'll do until I can think of something else." Then weakly, to the telephone, "Hello!"

"Hello!" came a faint answer. "Is this you, Letty? This is Louise. We're up at Barr's Crossing."

"We? Who's we? What——"

"Barry made me do it."

"Made you what?"

"I couldn't show him the ring this afternoon and we had a terrible spat. Then he told me he'd gotten everything straightened out down at the bank and that I had to show him I really loved him, ring or no ring. So we're—we're married!"

"You're— Oh, Louise!"

"And I've told him about the ring and he's forgiven me, and——"

"Louise!" Letty Madison shrieked it. "Louise—wait a minute! Tell it to Tom—he won't be mad at Barry—I won't let him! Wait there—don't even move until I get Tom. Hear me?"

A suddenly frantic creature dived out of the telephone-room, raced to a staring man, grasped him by an arm and, by the sheer strength of excitement, dragged him to the instrument. Ten minutes of lurid conversation, which calmed, degree by degree. At last:

"Don't want to talk to him? . . . What's that? . . . Maybe he is—must be if you love him. . . . No; I don't want to. . . . No—no; I don't. . . . Oh, all right, if you insist on it—put him on."

A wait.

"Hello, Tarleton! Guess you beat me—can't be peeved at you, though. It straightened out a little matter down here. . . . What's that? Funny? Yes—it is now. Wasn't a minute ago. . . . What's that? Sure. Oh, yes. Mean what I say—best to you both. Need any money, let me know. . . . . Sure. Good luck—congrats—you know. Good-by."

Then he turned from the telephone. Five minutes later, out in the living-room, a man in a flour-cap stood in a vain attempt to listen—to silence. For the conversation of the telephone-room had died away to faint murmurs in which the voices of a man and woman mingled, and finally to nothing. The eyes of Props grew wide and round. He dragged his flour-cap fretfully from his head and twisted it in nervous fingers. A gold mine was rapidly becoming only an ostrich. His lips moved, in a whispered announcement:

"They've clinched!"

He started toward the door—and stopped. He braced himself and cocked his head. It was a last chance—and the door of the telephone-room was opening.

TWO persons entered the room, a man and a girl, with their arms about each other. The man scowled—in the direction of Props.

"You blackmailer!"

Whereupon Props restored his flour-cap and moved a step toward the door.

"Just as you say," he announced, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I never seen it to fail. Do something for somebody, and they ain't no more grateful than nothing. But"—another step—"it's all right. Some of these times, though, just figure what might have happened if it hadn't 've been for me'n Willie. That's all I ask. If they's anybody out of this mess that ought to take the roses— But it's all right—it's all right."

"It's the truth, Tom." Laughter had taken the place of tears now. "If Louise and I hadn't thought Willie really swallowed that ring, she and Barry wouldn't have quarreled and they wouldn't have eloped. And goodness only knows how long it would have been before things were straightened out. And if you hadn't thought he'd swallowed it, you'd have hunted in the straw and read that inscription and— Oh, Tom, it would have been terrible!"

"Just what I say." Again Props took a grudging step toward the door. "But, then, some folks don't appreciate nothing. Now, if it'd been me"—he turned to pull his lips down at the corners and to spread-eagle a hand—"I'd figure what me'n Willie'd done would be worth a thousand dollars of anybody's money. But if somebody wants to be cheap and ornery and not appreciate nothing, why it's all right with me. There's always the newspaper——"

"Go as far as you like, old man. It's only a humorous story now, with no scandal attached. So do just what you please. Incidentally, while you do that, I'll see the district——"

"Me?" Props turned in surprise. "Do you think I'd stoop so low as to do a thing like that? Honest, now, do you? Me, that was trying his best all the time to straighten this thing out! Gosh! I thought you folks knew a decent guy when you seen one. Wasn't I just lying about wanting all that money? Wasn't all in the world I wanted a home for Willie and a few hundred dollars maybe for myself? Wasn't I——"

"Yes, and weren't you just headed for the door?"

"Er—yes, sir."

"Then keep on going. See what's happened to that ostrich. Put him in the garage for the night and then come back here. I'll have a check ready for five hundred—and the first train out of town is yours. Willie stays here, in the park zoo. We've taken a fancy to him—rather not trust him with you. You're just a bit too—well, too enterprising."

"Well, that's something." Props moved out to the veranda and on toward the shadows, where a bulky bush again stood with its head under a wing.

"C'mon, Willie," he ordered. "You've went and promoted yourself into a meal-ticket that don't punch out." Then he paused and looked mournfully toward the stars. "Gosh!" came at last. "I wish I was a ostrich!"

An Old-Time Stirring Sea Tale—
A Reminder of Jack London

The Blood-Ship

Captain Swope Lays His Plans to Get Rid of Newman, and Mutiny Is in the Air. All of Which Leads Jack Shreve to a Desperate and Terrible Decision—for the Sake of the Lady

By Norman Springer

Illustrations by Henry Pitz

Begin this story with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

YOU'LL have heard men talk of how a man that's drowning sees his whole life flashing past his eyes as he goes down. It was so I felt in that moment. For it seemed to me that all the deviltry and all the mystery of that hell-ship and the voyage I was making on her were coming to a head.

The way I'd come upon Newman first, in the Knitting Swede's, in Frisco—I thought of that. How I'd been boy enough to think to prove my manhood by walking with open eyes into the place the most notorious crimp alive was running. But there'd been no need for him to shanghai me—I'd shipped on the *Golden Bough*, for all I knew her to be the worst hell-ship in the trade, of my own free will. I'd shipped because Newman had—and he'd shipped because he'd heard of the lady—of Yankee Swope's wife that was no wife, that sailed with him and visited the fo'c's'le day after day to mend the mischief Swope and his bucko mates had done, who was beaten herself by that silky villain of the seas, if what we heard was true.

Oh, I could remember all that had passed: the way Newman had vanished—and the mystery of the way he'd shown himself at muster and struck the fear of God into Swope's black heart and lighted the blessed light of hope in the lady's eyes. They'd been in communication ever since, he and she, until just now, when I'd found them talking in the sail-locker and heard her telling him he must not kill Swope, no matter what he'd suffered from him.

And, for'ard, mutiny was in the air. We were a sorry lot. Newman and I were the only ones who'd shipped of our free will. A few squareheads—good sailormen, but slow and stupid. The rest were stiffs—the scum of the earth, like Blackie and Boston, convicts both, and planning mutiny and to be its leaders, for the sake of the treasure they'd told me of—a hundred thousand dollars in gold stored aft.

Mutiny—and they'd have had never a chance to bring it off but for one thing. Swope was against us, and Fitzgibbon, that dirty bully, the mate. Lynch, too—bucko and brute, but straight man, for all of that. And the four tradesmen who bunked aft and messed aft—two carpenters and two sailmakers, who carried arms, like the officers, and counted with them, not with the crew. A queer lay—I tell you it was.

The other stiffs didn't count. But the squareheads did. And from the second day little Nils had been dying in the port fo'c's'le—Nils, whom Swope had beaten first, and then Fitz, until his ribs stuck through his lungs! Oh, a hell-ship she was, the *Golden Bough!* I thought of it all—of Holy Joe, whom San Francisco knew as the Reverend Richard Deaken, sworn foe of all the crimps, whom the Knitting Swede had kidnaped and drugged and put aboard to punish him for his denunciations—of the way Swope had tried in cold blood to murder both Newman and myself by whipping us off the yard one night.

Mutiny—and the lady aft! She meant something to Newman, who had twice saved my life—she who had cried out to him when she had seen him first, as one lost in a desert might cry out at the sight of water.

Oh, I thought of it all—and I knew there was trouble in the air; I could sniff it as I ran. Although time enough had elapsed since the mate sang out his order to man the braces, the watch was not yet at the rail; and this was a strange thing in a ship where men literally flew about their work. The trouble was in the port fo'c's'le; I could see the crowd bunched on the deck before the door, and Fitzgibbon's voice had risen to a shrill scream as he poured blistering curses upon some luckless head.

I dodged across the deck and round the starboard side of the deck-house, and thus came upon the scene in a casual manner.

OVER on the port side of the deck, a royal shindy seemed to be preparing. Aye; the mate had at last struck fire from his squareheads. They were on the verge of open rebellion. The stiffs of the port watch had fallen to one side and stood quaking and irresolute, but the squareheads were bunched squarely between the mate and the fo'c's'le door, and to the mate's stream of curses they interposed a wall of their own oaths. Fitzgibbon had his right hand in his coat pocket, and all hands knew that hand was closed about the butt of a revolver; moreover, the tradesmen stood on either side of him, prepared to back him up in whatever course he chose to take. They were good men, those tradesmen, fighting men, and skilled in just such battles as this promised to be. The port watch Sails, who stood nearest to me, was armed with a heavy sheet-pin, and he stood with his face half turned toward the starboard side. Aye; they were canny fighters—if it came to blows, they would not be taken on the flank by surprise.

Fitzgibbon was swearing over the heads of the squareheads. He threw his words into the fo'c's'le. He was calling upon Holy Joe, the parson, to come out of it blasted quick and be skinned alive, b'Gawd! Aye; broken bones were being promised to poor Holy Joe. That was why the squareheads were showing fight—not to protect their own skins but to save the parson from the mate's wrath. For their little Nils was dying, and Holy Joe was by his side, praying for his passing soul. As I learned afterward, when the mate sang out for his watch to man the braces, all jumped to obey save the parson; he stayed with Nils. His absence was noted immediately, for the mate was lynx-eyed, and Fitzgibbon was all for invading the fo'c's'le and hauling out the truant by the scruff of the neck. Aye; Fitz was all for teaching a lesson with boot and fist—for Holy Joe was a small man and a pacifist, fair game for any bucko. But the squareheads would not have it so. For Nils was dying, and Holy Joe was praying for his soul.

Suddenly Fitzgibbon stopped cursing, and in a voice that meant business ordered the watch aft to the braces. The stiffs tumbled over themselves in their eagerness to obey; but not a squarehead budged. They still stood between the mate and his victim. So he drew the revolver out of his pocket and pointed it at Lindquist.

"Lay aft—or I'll splatter lead among you!" he shouted.

He meant it. He would have shot Lindquist, I am sure, for winging a man, or worse, meant little to the mate of the *Golden Bough*, and the squarehead bravely stood his ground. But the threat to shoot into the men who were shielding him had the effect of drawing the parson out of the fo'c's'le. He appeared suddenly in the lighted doorway.

"Oh ho; that brought you out of it—hey, you sniveling this-and-that!" hailed Fitzgibbon. He lifted his aim from Lindquist and brought the weapon to bear upon Holy Joe. "Step aft, here, you swab, or I'll drill you through, s'help me!"

The words brought a menacing growl from the squareheads; there was a stir among them, and they seemed about to fling themselves upon the trio. But Holy Joe checked the movement with a word.

"Steady, lads," said he. "No violence; obey your orders. Spread out there, boys, and let me through; I will speak with him."

Right up to Fitzgibbon he walked, and stopped and said to the bucko's face:

"Put away that weapon! Would you add another murder to your crimes?"

To me, to the mate and his henchmen—indeed, to all hands—it was a most astounding situation.

Aye; it was the stiff, not the officer, who commanded the deck that moment. By some strange magic I could not as yet fathom the little parson had assumed the same heroic proportions Newman had assumed the day he chased the skipper from the poop. Oh, it was no physical change that took place; it was rather as if the man doffed a mask and revealed himself to us in his true self. There he stood, a full head shorter than his antagonist, with his head tilted back to meet the larger man's eyes, and Bully Fitzgibbon quailed before his gaze.

"Put down that weapon!" Holy Joe repeated.

Slowly the mate lowered his arm.

The parson turned to the squareheads. Aye; he turned his back full upon the bucko, and the latter made no move against him.

"Obey your orders, men," Holy Joe said to the sailors. "Go to your work as he commands. I will stay with the boy."

The squareheads obeyed without question. They knew, just as all of us knew, that their little champion was in no danger of mishandling, at least not at that moment. They trooped aft, heavy-footed, murmuring but docile, and joined the stiffs at the lee braces. Holy Joe, now alone on that deck so far as physical backing went, turned again to the mate. But indeed he needed no physical backing; his indomitable spirit had cowed the bucko.

"Your men will give you no further trouble, sir; they are at their stations," said he.

It was the first time he had used the "sir." For an instant it seemed a weakening. It gave Fitzgibbon the heart to bluster.

"I ordered you aft with the rest," he began. "What d'ye mean——"

"I have other work to do this watch—as you know," interrupted the parson.

"You—you refuse duty?"

Holy Joe was silent for an instant. All of us were silent. One could have heard a pin drop upon the deck. Then, out of the port fo'c's'le, a dreadful sound came to our ears—a low, strangled moan. It stabbed the vitals of the most hardened of us; with my own eyes I saw the mate tremble. Aye; in some way Holy Joe had sent a fear into the brute soul of Fitzgibbon; in some way he had sent a fear into the brute souls of us all, and, at least in my case, a great wonder. The pain-filled wail of Nils, coming as it did, seemed magic-inspired to light for me a universal truth. I felt it crudely, saw it dimly, but there it was, dramatized before my eyes, the age-long, ceaseless battle between the beast in man and the God in man, the resistless power of service and sacrifice. Aye; and Holy Joe's softly spoken reply to the mate's words confirmed what I saw and felt.

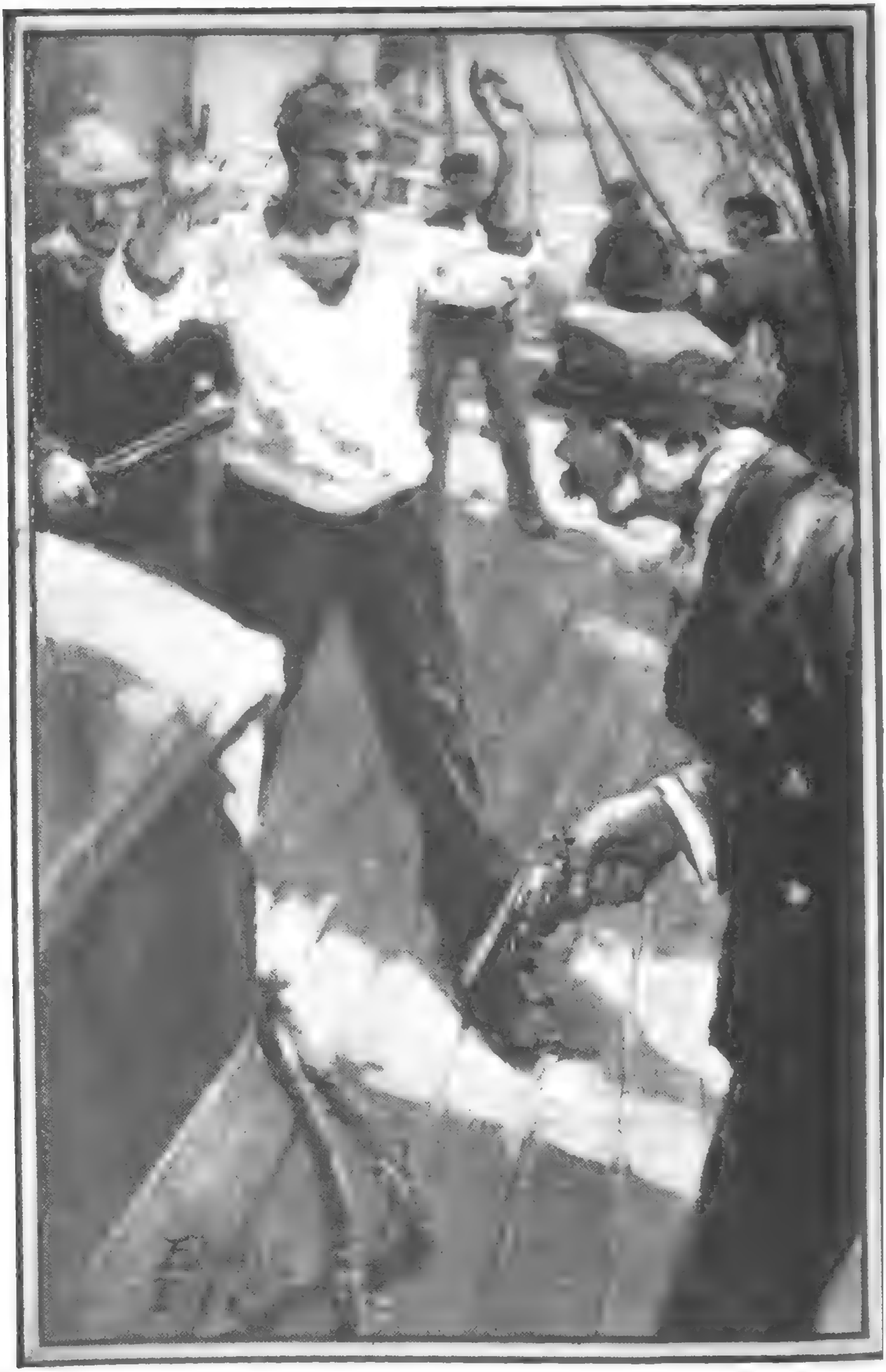
"You speak of my duty, sir," said he. "I see it—and do it." With that he turned on his heel and walked into the fo'c's'le.

WHEN he had disappeared, something seemed to have gone from the air we breathed, something electric and vitalizing. There was an immediate let-down of the nervous tension that had gripped us, a common sigh, and a half-hysterical snicker from some fellow behind me. Fitzgibbon seemed to come out of a trance; he shook himself and stared at Sails and then at Chips. He glared across the deck at us of the starboard watch. He even swore. But there was no life to his curse, and he made no step to follow the defiant stiff into the fo'c's'le. Instead, he went to the job at hand, and quite obviously sought to regain mastery and self-respect by sulphuric blustering toward the men bent over the ropes. He was a defeated man. He knew it, and we knew it.

A hand fell upon my shoulder. Newman stood behind me.

"A brave act and a brave man," said he. "But they will not let him keep his triumph." After a pause, he added. "They dare not."

I seized Newman's arm and led him aside, intending to impart my news. But eight bells struck, and while they were striking, Lynch's voice summoned the starboard watch to assist in the job the mate had started. We hurried aft with the crowd,



Newman laughed, but he also raised his hands above his head to show his unarmed condition and his pacific intent.

and I found chance to say to him no more than:

"Be careful; some one is spying upon you. Boston told me—and I saw him."

"Who?"

"I couldn't see. It was too dark, and he cleared out on the run. Ask the nigger."

When we had belayed, the watch was relieved, and Newman went aft to the wheel. Lynch kept the rest of us on the jump, as ever, and I had no chance to steal a word with the nigger when he came forward. At four bells I relieved the wheel. I found Captain Swope and the mate pacing the poop with their heads together. As I took over the wheel, Newman whispered to me,

"Keep your weather-eye lifted for squalls, Jack."

I did not need his warning; the mere presence of either of the pair was sufficient to keep any sailorman wide awake and watchful of his "p's" and "q's" while steering her. There was nothing uncommon about the old man's presence; he was in the habit of appearing on the poop at all hours of the night—though he never went for'ard. But for the mate to give up his sleep in fair weather was unprecedented.

Aye; I could smell trouble coming.

Captain Swope could smell it, too. That is why he walked the deck with Fitzgibbon by his side. I could feel the alertness of the man. Swope had his finger upon the pulse of his ship. A mutiny, however sudden, would not catch the master of the *Golden Bough* napping. That is what I thought as I watched him, and Boston's vague scheme became harebrained in my eyes.

THE second mate was seldom aft during the two hours I stood at the wheel. The times he did appear, he engaged in conversation with the old man beyond my hearing. But near midnight he clumped aft hurriedly, bringing the tradesmen with him. The strollers happened to be near me at the moment he appeared, and he came toward them, speaking.

"Well, sir—he's gone," he said.

So I knew that Nils was dead.

"Very good," said Swope. "And the hands?"

"All quiet, sir."

Lynch's voice was quite respectful, but I fancied I detected in it a note of contempt.

"There was danger of trouble, even before the boy went out," he went on. "Morton stood by the door and heard it all." This Morton was the sailmaker in the starboard watch. "The big cockney in the port watch was all for trouble, a rush aft of all hands; he said he had the backing of my watch. The squareheads were willing; they want revenge. But the big jasper in my watch, Newman, went into the fo'c's'le and squelched the scheme with a word. He clapped a stopper on the cockney's jaw and told the squareheads there was to be no trouble. So there will be none, Captain."

A black curse slid out of the skipper's mouth. Aye; the man breathed fury.

"So—he commands for'ard, eh? he said. "Well, I command aft." He seemed to think over the matter for a moment and arrive at a decision. "Well, mister, if it doesn't happen to-night, it may happen to-morrow night," he said. "Tell your men to keep their eyes and ears open. And—better have that stiff carted aft and your sailmaker fit him to canvas. We'll dump him at dawn."

"Very good, sir," replied Lynch, and he went forward again.

The old man and the mate immediately went into conference. They moved over to the rail and spoke in soft tones; so I overheard nothing they said.

Presently the second mate returned aft. He said, as he approached the skipper, in the same clear, carrying voice he had used before:

"The squareheads won't give up the body. They'll fight if we take it. They say they'll drop him overside themselves."

The captain appeared pleased with this news. He laughed—that soft chuckle of his that contained so much malice and cruelty.

"Oh, let the dogs dispose of their own offal, mister," he said carelessly. Then, when Lynch went down to the main-deck, Swope spoke eagerly, though in low voice, to the mate. Aye; the old man was gleeful, and the mate received his instructions with servile pleasure. Presently they went below, and the yelp of the cabin-boy—roused from sleep, doubtless, by the toe of the skipper's boot—and the subsequent clink of glasses told me the worthies were toasting the occasion. I was consumed with dread. But just what to dread I could not guess.

The cockney took over the helm at midnight. I hurried forward, eager to see what was happening in the fore part of the ship, and anxious to speak with Newman.

The air of unease, of expectancy, which I felt so strongly aft, was even more evident for'ard. My watch, though off duty, did not go below directly. Men were standing about, whispering to each other. The wheel and lookout had been relieved, but the mate did not summon his watch to labor, as was his custom; he kept to the poop, and we heard not a peep from him.

I FOUND Newman in the port fo'c's'le, talking to Holy Joe. When I entered, I heard Newman say:

"They are good, simple lads—use your authority as a minister. Reason, command, do your best to convince them they must be obedient. Tell them they will be the ones to suffer in case of trouble."

"I will do my best," the parson answered. With a nod to me, he went out on deck.

"Who was he?" I asked, when we were alone. Newman looked blank. "The spy," I added. "Didn't you ask the nigger?"

"Oh, that—I have been too busy to bother about it," was the careless response. "It really doesn't matter, Jack; I dare say it was some one *he* set to dog my heels." He inclined his head aft to indicate who "he" might be.

"But—the lady's warning—and remember what happened that night on the yard-arm! I tell you, Newman, the afterguard is awake and waiting; the old man is afraid of trouble, and is prepared. I think he is afraid you will lead the crowd and try to take the ship."

"No; he is afraid I won't," said Newman.

I blinked. The words struck me with the force of a blow. I knew he spoke the truth—but I could not understand.

The big man smiled at my puzzled expression.

"Strange things happen in this ship, eh, Jack?" said he in a kindly voice. "No wonder you are stumped—you are too young and straightforward to be alert to intrigue. You do not understand; yet you are eager to risk your skin in another man's quarrel? And you believe in me, eh, Jack?"

I felt embarrassed and a little resentful. I did not like to be reminded so bluntly of my youth and inexperience.

"You saved my life, and I don't forget a debt like that," I growled ungraciously.

Newman gave a little chuckle. He knew very well it was liking, not debt, that made me his man.

"I want you to know, Jack, that your friendship is a strength to me," he said, with sudden earnestness. "It is a strength and a comfort to her, too. Your unquestioning faith in me has given both of us courage. You have helped me regain my own faith in men and in right. Heaven knows, a man needs faith in this ship!"

Oh, but I was exalted by those words! I was in the hero-worship stage of life, and this mysterious giant by my side was my chosen idol. The lady aft had quickened into life whatever chivalry my nature contained, and it was pure romantic delight to be told I had served her by loyalty to the man. Aye; I felt lifted up. I felt important.

"You can count on me; I'll back you to the limit," I said. Then I rushed on eagerly and blurted out what was on my mind. "You are in danger. I know it; I feel it. That old man is planning something against you. Remember that night on the yard-arm! Remember the lady's warning! Look at Nils! I tell you, we'll have to fight. You can depend upon me; I'll back you to the limit in anything. So will the square-heads—you know how desperate and bitter they are. So will the stiffs—they are just waiting for you to say the word. Aye; every man Jack for'ard will follow you——"

He checked me with stern words.

"Put that thought out of your mind!" he exclaimed. "There will be no mutiny if I can prevent it. If one occurs, I shall help put it down."

I was astonished and crestfallen. But after a moment he went on, more kindly:

"I know you are thinking of my safety, lad—and I thank you. But you do not know what you are proposing. Mutiny on the high seas is madness, and these jail-birds for'ard would be viler masters than Swope. Besides, you do not understand the true situation—an uprising of the crew, whether or not led by me, is the very thing the captain expects and wishes. You are quite right in thinking he intends to kill me—and not me alone—but at present he is checkmated. I am an able seaman; I do my work and enjoy the favor of my watch-officer, and both Lynch and the tradesmen revere the lady and hate, while they fear, their master. But in case of a mutiny—why, Jack, those fellows would unite and back up Swope in anything he chose to do. Their safety would depend upon it. He would have his excuse to kill."

"But if we win—" I began.

"We would be murderers, and our necks would be forfeit," he interrupted. "Put away the thought, lad, for only evil can come of it. A mutiny would mean disaster to the crew, to you, to me and, above all, to her. For her sake, Jack, we must prevent any outbreak."

"For her sake?" I echoed. I was aghast. "You don't mean that she would be harmed?" I exclaimed.

He nodded, and there crept into his eyes an expression grim and desperate.

"I have cursed myself for giving way to the storm of hate and passion that brought me on board this ship," he said moodily. "And yet—it was destiny—it could not have been otherwise." He observed my questioning face and added: "Swope knows we have talked together, she and I. He knows he must extinguish us both if he would rebury for good and all the truth he thought was already buried."

"His wife—his own wife!" I exclaimed.

The words probed the quick. For a minute Newman's reserve was gone.

"It is a lie, a legal lie!" he cried. "She bears the beast's name, but before God she is not his wife!"

He calmed immediately. His self-control took charge; it was as if his will, caught napping for an instant, woke and drew a curtain that shut out alien eyes.

I was dumb, ashamed and sorry to have unwittingly hurt my friend. But now he was speaking again in his accustomed sober, emotionless voice.

"I'd like to explain matters to you, Jack, for of course I trust you absolutely. But the secret is not mine alone."

"You don't have to explain anything," I blurted eagerly. "I know you are all right, and you know I'm your man."

"By George, you are a friend!" he exclaimed. "But I will not sail under false colors in your eyes. I am an escaped felon. I have been in prison."

"Oh, I guessed that long ago," I said carelessly.

"I was in prison for a vile crime, a convicted murderer."

"I know you are a square man, and that is all that counts with me," I asserted.

He looked his thanks.

"If I were not, your faith would make me square," he said. "But you are right. I am not so black; I am not a murderer. I came on board the *Golden Bough* intending to become one—but that madness is past. Now I am anxious to prevent killing—any killing. Now I am eager to preserve peace.

"For she is safe so long as I am alive and unfettered. You can understand that, can you not? Swope is a fiend, Jack, more than half insane from long indulgence of his cruel lusts; but he is wary, and he will not offer her violence or do her any harm while I am at large. By God, to do so would be his death-warrant, and he knows it! Besides, he must consider Lynch. The second mate is her friend—and an honest man, if a stupid and brutal one. And he is not so dense but that he has an inkling of the state of affairs on the ship. He would not lift a finger to aid me in case of trouble—you remember the warning he gave us that day we were in the rigging—for he is an officer, a bucko, and I am a hand. But he would not stand for another such attempt at murder as Swope made the night we were aloft. He told Swope he would not stand for it; he would not keep silent. And it was a brave thing to do—to defy such a master. This is Lynch's last voyage in the *Golden Bough*, as he well knows. So our canny skipper set to work his crooked wits, and for weeks he has been fomenting a rebellion of the crew. Mr. Fitz is a more pliant and obedient tool than Lynch."

I WAS excited, wide-eyed. I was suddenly seeing a light. Aye; the words I heard were truth, I knew. It explained what I had seen and heard that night upon the poop. This trouble that threatened was made to order, to the captain's order, even as Newman said.

"Good heavens! Then Nils' death—and the hazing—" I could not continue. The heartlessness, the malignant cruelty of the man who had ordered these things were too horrifying.

"Nils' injury was unpremeditated, I believe," said Newman, "but leaving him die without attention or nursing was a calculated brutality, designed to inflame the boy's mates. Fitzgibbon's bitter hazing, without distinction or justice, was for the same purpose. They kept a close eye upon the boy's condition; they evidently figured that the hour of his death would be the hour of explosion. As you know, it very nearly was—only the parson's courage averted trouble in the dog-watch, and but a little while ago I had to quiet a storm. But the danger is past now, I think. The little fellow's mates are naturally quiet, law-abiding fellows."

"The squareheads may be kept quiet," I said, "but how about the stiffs? How about Boston and Blackie?"

An expression of disgust and contempt showed in his face.

"I will attend to them if they try any of their tricks," he said.

"But they are, and have been, trying their tricks," I persisted, "and for some reason they are eager to have you know what they are up to. Boston told me to tell you." I repeated Boston's gossip. "He knew about the spy," I said.

He nodded.

"I know; I have had an eye upon them. What Boston told you about the treasure is quite true; the ship is carrying specie. And they are precious rascals, capable of any villainy. I know them well; they—they broke jail with me. But they have wit enough to know that their gang of stiffs could put up no sort of fight unless backed by the sailors in the crew. It is loot they are after, and there will be trouble from them before the ship makes port. But now we are in mid-sea, and they realize they would be quite helpless with a ship on their hands and no navigator. That is what they want of me. A pair of poisonous rats, Jack! But they will keep quiet. They had better. I promised them I would kill them both if they disobeyed me."

I gazed at the big man with admiring awe. He spoke so coolly, was so conscious of the strength and power that was in himself. Aye; here was the sort of man I should like to be, I thought—here was the true hard case, no bully, no ruffian, but a man, a good man, a man so hard and bright, so finely tempered, he was to the rest of us as steel to mud. Oddly enough, as I had this thought, it also occurred to me that there was a man in the ship who might with justice claim to be Newman's peer, another man of heroic stature—poor meek little Holy Joe.

"If Swope does not interfere with the decent burial of that poor boy, there will be no outbreak," added Newman.

"He will not interfere," I was able to assure him. I repeated the skipper's words to Lynch.

To my surprise, Newman was disturbed by this news. He stared at me, frowning.

"Swope said that?" he exclaimed. "Now, what is he up to?"

He sat thinking for a moment; then he said:

"The burial of Nils is the weak point in my defense. If Swope offers an indignity to the boy's body, even I will not be able to restrain Nils' mates. Surely Swope has guessed that. I have planned to bury the lad from the fore deck just as quickly as preparations can be made; that is why Lindquist is at work on the fore hatch. If Swope is overlooking this chance, he must have something else up his sleeve." He got to his feet and moved toward the door. "Lindquist must be nearly finished. I will carry out my plan at any hazard. Common decency demands we should not let the boy be cast into the sea by the very men who murdered him."

At the door we were met by Olson, one of the squareheads, come to tell Newman that all was ready for the burial. So we joined the crowd, and Nils was put away in the dead of night by the light of one lantern and many stars. The hum of the wind aloft and the purr and slap of the waters against the bows were his requiem.

THAT scene left its mark upon the mind of every man who took part in or witnessed it—and every fo'c's'le man save the helmsman saw Nils go over the side. It was already late in the middle watch, but no man had yet gone to his sleep; and, considering the habits of sailors and the custom of the sea, this single fact describes how disturbed was the common mind.

Yet the putting-away of Nils was peaceful. We knew that the mate was not alone upon the poop, that the men aft were alert and must know what was going on forward, but, despite Newman's fears, there was no interference from that quarter.

Nils' bier was a painter's stage, and four of the lad's shipmates held the plank upon their shoulders, with the weighted feet of the shrouded form pointed outboard. The rest of us, sailors and stiffs, stood about with bared, bowed heads—aye; and most of us, I think, with wet eyes and tight throats. It seemed a cruel and awful thing to see one of our number disappear forever, and Holy Joe's words, spoken so softly and clearly, were of a kind to squeeze the hearts of even bad men.

Yet he did not preach at us, or even look at us. He wasted no words, and the ceremony proceeded with the dispatch Newman desired. All Holy Joe did was lift his face to the night and pray in simple words that Nils might have a safe passage on this long voyage he was starting. The words seemed to wash clean our minds. For the moment the most vicious man in that hard and vicious crowd thought cleanly and innocently. Our wrongs and hatreds seemed small and of little consequence. Aye; while Holy Joe prayed for the dead, we stood about like a group of awed children. When he was finished praying, he recited the beautiful words of the service and raised his hand—and the pall-bearers tipped their burden into the sea.

Silently we listened to the dull splash; silently we watched the four men lower the stage to the deck. It was over.

SOME of my watch went into the fo'c's'le to their bunks. Most of the men sat about the decks and smoked and talked in whispers. But the topic of Nils was avoided, as was talk of mutiny. The squareheads did not mutter threats; the stiffs did not curse. The spell of the parson's words was still upon us, and peace reigned.

Newman had won, I thought, and danger was past.

I found the nigger seated upon the fore bitts, whetting his knife upon a stone. There was something sinisterly suggestive about his occupation at that hour; it was the first rift in the strange calm which had fallen upon the crew.

"Tell me, Nigger; who's the man that's spying on the big fellow?" I said abruptly, as I sat down beside him.

Nigger did not pause in his work, but he turned his battered face to me. A couple of days before he had fallen afoul of the mate's brass knuckles for perhaps the twentieth time since he had been in the ship, and his face was a mass of bruised flesh, a shocking sight, even though his color hid the extent of his injuries.

"Who say dat Ah know?" demanded Nigger, in reply to my question.

"Boston said so."

"Dat man's too free wif his lip. Ah don't tell him Ah knows who's the spy; Ah tells him Ah knows dey is one."

I waited patiently, for Nigger's temper would not bear pressing. He reversed his stone, spat upon it and resumed his monotonous whetting, then, after looking round to make sure he could not be overheard, explained what he did know.

"Night befoh last Ah was hangin' round aft——"

"What?" I cried, surprised. "Hanging round aft—what for?"

"Dat's my business," he told me curtly. Then, after a moment, he added: "But Ah don't care if yoh know, because Ah knows yoh ain't no snitch. Ah was hangin' round waitin' to meet Mistah Mate when he ain't got them othah two debbils wif him. Ah was waitin' round to meet dat man alone. And he come to de break ob de poop wif de old man, and de old man say: "Ah got a good man watchin' every move he makes; he can't turn round in de fo'c's'le wifout me knowin' it. We'll be wahned befoh it happens.' Dat's what de old man say to Mistah Mate. And Ah knows he mus' be talking about de big fellow, and so Ah tells Boston about it."

"But didn't you hear any names mentioned?" I asked him.

"Dat's all Ah hears," he answered. "Den dey went away."

I was disappointed. The nigger's news amounted to just nothing; we already knew that a spy was watching Newman. But indeed this fact seemed not so threatening as it had a few hours before. Newman's careless contempt of the spy had made me contemptuous, too. And, indeed, what could a spy report against the big man that could injure him? Newman was openly working for peace, counseling obedience; his actions invited scrutiny. I voiced this thought to my companion.

"Well, anyway, a spy can't hurt Newman. He is doing nothing underhand or wrong. He's keeping peace in this ship."

Nigger gave a queer little hoot of derision. "Does Ah look like peace?" he said. "Dis am a debbil-ship; Ah tells yoh dey can't be no peace in dis ship nohow."

I gestured toward the fore hatch. A dozen men sat upon it, quietly smoking and gossipping.

"The squally weather is past," I said. "Those lads don't want trouble. A few hours ago they were all for fight—but now they've settled down. And don't you try to start trouble. The big fellow wants peace; the lady wants peace; we must help them to keep peace. Don't you want to help the lady and the big fellow, Nigger?"

"De lady been awful good to me," said Nigger, in almost a whisper. "Ah gone crazy long ago if it ain't foh de lady." He stopped his stropping and tried the edge of the blade with his thumb; then, suddenly, he reached out and clutched my wrist, and continued, in a voice so charged with pain and grief that I was appalled:

"Ah'd do mos' anything foh de lady, but, Shreve, it ain't foh me and it ain't foh any of us for'ard to say what's goin' to happen in dis ship. Ah ain't no sea-lawyer; man and boy Ah've gone to sea twenty year, and Ah ain't nebber made no trouble in no ship—no suh. But, O mah Lawd, yoh knows what all's happened to me in dis ship! Dey won't let me be a man. 'Yoh niggah—yoh black beast!' Dat's what dey calls me, and dat's what dey makes me. Ah wants peace; yoh wants peace—but does dey want peace? No suh! Yoh say dis ship peaceful now? Dis am a debbil-ship, and dey's a king debbil aft. And dey's a shark overside, and he wasn't waitin' foh what jus' went into the water—no suh! Yoh ebber sail out east? Yoh ebber see de quiet befoh a typhoon, so quiet seems like yoh can't breathe? Dat's de kind ob peace dat's on de *Golden Bough*. Ah don't want to make no trouble no time, but, O mah Lawd, when Ah does mah work right an' gets hazed foh it, when dat mate makes a beast out ob me—does yoh t'ink Ah stand dat fohebber?"

I had no answer of good cheer. What could I say? The man's wrongs were too bitter, his hurts too constant to be glossed over or soothed by any words I could think of. For I knew he still had weeks of brutal mistreatment ahead of him. This nigger was a man who would not, perhaps could not, cringe and whine—and so the mate was "breaking" him.

But, after all, Nigger gave me the promise I wished.

"Ah ain't no sea-lawyer; ah nebber talks trouble to de crew," he said. "Ah nebber wants trouble, and Ah nebber stirs it up."

I WAS dumfounded when Captain Swope's blow fell. I had a naive belief that Newman had checkmated his enemy for good when he averted the mutiny. I was not blessed with much foresight in the days of my youth.

Because there were so many stiffs on board who could not steer, we sailormen had frequent tricks at the wheel. That very day, in the afternoon watch, the rotation brought my trick again. As usual, I relieved Newman. He gave me the course, and I repeated it aloud, as is the custom, and then he whispered hurriedly:

"I think he intends to imprison me. Help Deaken to keep peace. Remember—my life—and hers—may depend upon it."

That was all. He started forward. I wanted to call after him, run after him, ask a score of questions and directions. But I did not dare speak or move. For Swope was on deck, lounging by the companion-hatch, staring in our direction, and Fitzgibbon stood by his side. They had appeared from the cabin in the last half-minute. Lynch, who had the deck, stood apart from the others, but he, too, was looking aft—not at me but at my friend. There was that in the bearing of the officers which declared plainly that something unpleasant was about to happen.

Yet Newman was permitted to pass the companion-hatch without interference. In fact, the pair turned their backs on him. I had, for an instant, the wild hope that Newman was mistaken in his fears. But only for an instant—because, when Newman neared the for'ard end of the poop, the two tradesmen of the port watch suddenly popped up from the ladder and confronted him. Sails carried a sawed-off shotgun in the crook of his arm, and Chips had a pair of handcuffs dangling in his grasp.

Newman stopped short. Who would not, with the muzzle of a shotgun carelessly pointed at his breast? No order to halt was needed.

Suddenly I saw through the skipper's game. Aye; and the devilish craft of it horrified me and wrung a cry of warning from my throat. For, when Newman halted, Swope and Fitzgibbon turned toward him, and, while Swope continued to lounge against the hatch, the mate closed in behind Newman, and I saw a revolver in his hand. At the same time the man with the shotgun said something to Newman, something that angered the big fellow. I could tell from the way his shoulders humped and his body tensed. Squarely behind him stood the mate.

OH, IT was a clever murder Swope had planned, a safe murder! If Newman made any motion that could be interpreted as resisting arrest and was shot in the back and killed—why, the officer who shot him was performing his duty, and an unruly sailor had received his deserts. That is the way the log would put it, and that is the way folks ashore would look at it.

The second mate saw through the scheme also. I am sure he had no previous knowledge of it, for an expression of surprise and consternation showed in his face, and he threw up his arm in a warning gesture. But it was I who warned Newman. I sang out lustily,

"Look out—behind you!"

Newman looked behind him. He threw back his head and laughed. Aye; it amused him to see the mate standing there so sheepishly, with his pistol in his hand. But I did not laugh, for Yankee Swope was staring at me, and there was fury in his face. God's truth, my hair stood up and my toes crawled in their boots! Oh, I knew I had let myself in for it with that warning shout.

But if Newman laughed, he did not venture to move. He, too, saw through the skipper's plan, and by his action promptly defeated it. He laughed, but he also raised his hands above his head to show his unarmed condition and his pacific intent. Then, ignoring the mate, he spoke to Captain Swope.

"Am I to consider myself under arrest, Captain?"

Swope turned his face to the speaker, and glad I was to be free of his gaze. He was a furious man that moment; I could see him biting his lips and clenching and unclenching his hands from excess of anger. Yet he answered Newman in a soft, even voice, and in the same half-bantering vein the big fellow had used. Aye; he was a strong man, was Swope. He could control his temper when he thought it necessary.

"Yes, my man; you may consider yourself under arrest," he said.

"Then you will notice I offer no resistance," added Newman. "I am unarmed, and eager to obey all legal commands of my captain. Shall I lower my arms and permit this gentleman to fasten the irons upon my wrists?"

"No less eager to break into limbo than to break out of it—eh?" commented the captain. "Yes; I grant you permission to be handcuffed—but not that way. Turn round and place your hands together behind your back."

Newman promptly complied with the directions, and the carpenter stepped forward and slipped on the cuffs.

"Lock those irons tightly, Connelly," Swope directed the tradesman. "We have to deal with a desperate man, a tricky man, a damned jailbird, Connelly. Squeeze those irons down upon his wrists. It doesn't matter if they pinch him."

From where I stood I could not see, but I could imagine the steel rings biting cruelly into my friend's flesh. I felt a rage against the captain which overcame the sick fear of what he might do to me. But my rage was impotent; it could not help Newman.

Lynch tried to help him; and by his action indicated plainly what was his position in the matter of the arrest. He crossed the deck and examined the prisoner's wrists.

"These irons are too tight and will torture the man," he said to the captain. "In my judgment, sir, it is not necessary to secure him in this fashion."

"In my judgment it is," was Swope's bland response. Then he added: "And now, Mr. Fitzgibbon, and you, Mr. Lynch, if you will escort this mutinous scoundrel below to the cabin, I'll see that this affair is properly entered in the log-book, and then we will put this man in a place where he cannot work mischief."

A moment later I was alone on the poop. So quickly and quietly had the affair been managed that none of the watch on deck seemed to be aware of it. They were busied about the fore part of the ship at the various jobs Lynch had set them to. But the tradesmen of the watch were not in sight, and I had no doubt they were forewarned and had joined the port-watch tradesmen before the cabin to guard against any possible trouble.

I wondered what to do. Do something, I felt I must. If I sang out and informed the watch, the afterguard would reach me and squelch my voice long before my mates could lay aft. And, indeed, laying aft in a body was what the crew must not do. That would be trouble, mutiny perhaps, and Newman's injunction was to keep the peace.

I could do nothing to help my friend. But I felt I must do something. The cabin skylights were open, for it was tropic weather, and a murmur of voices ascended through the opening. I could not distinguish words, but I felt I must know what they were saying to Newman or about him. So I took a chance. I slipped the wheel into the becket and crept to the edge of the skylights.

I could peek into only a narrow section of the saloon, for I did not dare shove my face into the opening. They would have seen me. But I could hear.

The first voice I heard was the voice of one of my fo'c's'le mates, and he was giving tesitmony against Newman.

" 'E was in the syle-locker mykin' hup to 'er," the speaker said, "an' tellin' as 'ow 'e'd lead the crew arft and kill the hofficers and tyke charge 'imself. That's wot 'e says, s' 'elp me!"

"Ah, yes; he was making up to her, eh? And plotting mutiny? And my wife lent herself to such a scheme, did she?" This came in Swope's voice, soft, purring, the very tone an insult.

"You know that creature is lying, Angus!" broke in another voice—the lady's voice, hot with anger and resentment and loathing. "You know very well why I met Roy in the sail-locker; you know very well we were planning to avoid bloodshed, not cause it."

"What are you doing here?" exclaimed the captain, with a savage edge to his words. "This is a man's business, madam! Return to your room at once. Mr. Fitzgibbon, take her to her room!"

There was the sound of movement below. A chair scraped. Then Lynch's voice rang out sharply,

"Stop that, Fitz!"

The lady's voice said,

"You need not touch me; I am going." A second later she spoke again, from a different point, and I judged her to be in the doorway of her stateroom. "You, at least, Mr. Lynch, will bear witness that I deny these charges against myself and against—against him. They are lies. This spy is lying; my husband is lying. I know the truth." A door closed, and I knew the lady was gone from the scene.

"Now we will continue our examination," said Captain Swope.

JUST then I heard a slatting of canvas aloft. I sped for the wheel, and when, an instant later, the tradesman Morton poked his head above the level of the poop and looked aft, I had the ship steady again. Morton's head disappeared, and, after waiting a few moments to make sure he did not intend coming up on the poop, I returned to the skylight.

My precious shipmate was talking again.

"Hi 'eard 'im sy in the Knitting Swede's 'ow 'e was shippin' in this ship just to ryse 'ell."

"He said that, did he?" commented Captain Swope. "Now, what have you to say to that, Newman?"

For the first time I heard my friend's voice. His words were cool, contemptuous. Aye; they heartened me. They told me he was far from being defeated.

"The rat lies, of course—as all of you know."

"And you say that Newman has persistently endeavored to stir up the crew to acts of disobedience and violence?" continued the captain.

"Yes, sir," was the answer. " 'E would sy as 'ow there was a lot o' money in the lazaret, and if we would follow 'im arft, 'e would give hit to us."

"Now, I know that is a lie!" broke in Lynch. The second mate's voice was also contemptuous, but not cool. I could tell he was excited and angry. "I've watched this crowd, Captain; I know them like I know the back of my hand. This man, Newman, is the best sailor for'ard, and the strongest influence for peace. He and the little Holy Joe the crimp gave us prevented a riot last night. I know this fellow is lying, Captain!"

"That will do, Mr. Lynch!" exclaimed

Swope. "I did not ask your opinion in this matter. I would suggest, sir, that it is your watch on deck, and the ship may need your attention."

"Very good, sir," retorted Lynch. "But I wish to tell you, Captain—I know this man is innocent of these charges, and I will not be a party to your action against him."

"That will do, sir; go on deck!" was the captain's command.

I WAS at the wheel and the ship was on her course when the second mate appeared. Oh, but he was in a towering rage! He stamped the deck like a full watch. He sang out to me:

"Damn your eye, man; watch your wheel. The wake is like a snake's track!"

"Yes, sir," I answered meekly, and held her nose true. He looked at me sharply, and I knew that he guessed what I had been up to. But he said nothing more; instead, he stormed for'ard and worked out his rage among the stiffs.

I overheard no more of the proceedings in the cabin, for I did not dare leave the wheel while Lynch was on deck. But I was easier in my mind concerning Newman's fate, for what I had overheard convinced me the big fellow stood in no immediate danger of his life. That Swope meant to kill, I had not the least doubt—Newman himself had said as much—but the time was not ripe for that act.

So I occupied myself with thoughts about the traitor in the crew.

I cursed myself for a stupid fool not to have known Cockney was the spy. I should have known. He was that sort—a bully and a bootlicker by turns. In the fo'c's'le he was more violent than any other in his denunciation of the buckos; on deck he cringed before them. He had always fawned upon Newman, but I suspected he hated my friend because of what happened at the Knitting Swede's. But I had not suspected him of treachery to his fo'c's'le mates, because he was an old sailor and a good one, and there were plenty of stiffs on board more fitted, I thought, for spy's work. But Cockney was the man. I could not mistake his voice for another's. He was even now down below, bearing false witness against my friend.

I watched the deck closely, and pretty soon I saw the cockney going for'ard. So I knew that the farcical examination of Newman was ended, and that he was probably locked up with the rats in the lazaret. I promised myself I would have a heart-to-heart talk with Cockney just as soon as eight bells released me from the wheel.

But when eight bells did go, I had something else to think about. Indeed, yes! My own skin, no less.

All hands were mustered aft when the port watch came on deck. This was unusual, a break in routine, for it was not customary to call the crew aft at the close of the day watches. Moreover, the men were herded by the tradesmen, who were armed.

When the men were collected by the mainmast, the little parson was plucked out of the crowd and ushered into the cabin, where the skipper and the mate awaited him. Aye; that was the reason for the muster. Holy Joe must be punished for his defiance of Fitzgibbon. Five minutes after he entered the cabin he was thrown out upon the deck, bruised, bleeding and unconscious, and his mates were told to pick him up and carry him forward.

The old man and the mate appeared on the poop immediately afterward. The instant I clapped eyes upon Swope, I knew that my turn was next. I saw it in his eyes, in his face and carriage. He looked and behaved just as he had that day he attacked Nils. He looked at me with a bright, cruel glare; he smiled and licked his lips with his tongue. Oh, I was frightened! Worse, I felt sick and weak. And I felt anger, too. Aye; there was rising in me a wild and murderous rage, which, if I let it go, would, I knew, master both fear and caution. I kept repeating to myself during the few minutes of grace allowed me, "I must not lose my temper; I must not lose my temper." For if I did lose my temper and defy my masters with fist and tongue, I knew I should be beaten till I was physically disabled, perhaps fatally disabled. And then who would hold the crew in check; who would labor to save Newman?

The cockney came aft to relieve the wheel. There was a smirk on his face and a swagger in his walk as he came along the lee side of the poop. I noticed him leer confidentially at the mate as he passed that worthy. Oh, that cockney thought himself a very clever fellow, no doubt, having been taken into the confidence of the ship's masters, having been assigned to do their secret dirty work. It was all I could do to keep from flying at his throat when he came within reach of my arms.

He murmured some hypocritical words as he stepped into my place. He was a good dissembler.

"My heye; but poor 'Oly Joe caught it!" says he. "They bloomin' near skinned 'im alive. They 'ave Newman in the lazaret. Blimme, Shreve, we got to do somethink abaht it!"

The answer he got was a grunt. My mind and eyes were on the buckos. I started forward, saying to myself, "I must not lose my temper."

"NOT so fast, my lad. I think I should like to look you over."

These were the words with which Captain Swope arrested my progress. He had permitted me to almost reach the ladder leading to the main-deck before he hailed. The cat and the mouse—aye; that was it! He must play with his prey. Such teasing gave him pleasure.

I stopped, of course, and turned and faced him. Never did Captain Swope remind me more of a cat than that instant when I met his glittering, pitiless eyes and saw his smiling, red-lipped mouth and listened to his soft, purring voice. I was his mouse, helpless, trapped. God's truth, I felt like one!

He looked me over slowly from head to foot, while Fitzgibbon stood close by.

Finally, he spoke again.

"What is your name?"

"Jack Shreve, sir," I answered.

"Shreve? Now, what sign-board did you rob? Shreve is a good name, too good for a fo'c's'le rat. Did you come by it honestly? Did you have a father by that name? I dare say not. A gutter-product would not know his father. Eh, my lad?"

There was no mistaking the deliberate insult or its foul meaning. Despite my efforts, I felt the blood in my cheeks, and my fingers clenched of their own accord. I thought how white was Yankee Swope's neck, and how near, and how easily I could reach out and choke the vile words in his throat. I very nearly lost my temper—and with it, my life, and, I think, the other two lives, which I actually valued above my own.

The thing which saved me was the glimpse of a cold, speculative gleam in my tormentor's eyes. It was the mere shadow of an expression, but it acted like cold water upon my hot thoughts. I divined, suddenly, that something more than sport was behind the captain's insults. He wanted me to blow up in a great rage, and attack him, or the mate. I suddenly knew this was so, and the danger of my losing my temper was past.

I lowered my eyes, afraid their expression would betray my knowledge, and said submissively,

"Yes, sir; I guess so, sir."

"I was told you had a long tongue, but you do not seem very glib this minute," Captain Swope went on. "You've taken a reef in it—eh, Shreve?"

I said,

"Yes, sir."

"But you forgot to take a reef in it a while back, didn't you?" I knew he was referring to the shout that warned Newman. I did not venture a reply. "So now you have put your tongue in gaskets," he commented, after a pause. "Too bad you didn't do it before. A long tongue is a very bad habit, my lad, and I do not allow my hands to have bad habits. I correct them—so!"

He struck me then, not a heavy, stunning blow, but a short-armed, slashing uppercut, which ripped the flesh of my cheek and sent me stumbling backward against Fitzgibbon. I took that blow meekly; I took Fitzgibbon's harder blow meekly. I stood there and let the two of them pommel me and knock me down and kick me, and I made no show of resistance. I buried my head in my arms and drew up my knees and let them work their will on me.

Oh, it was a cruel dressing-down they gave me! My face became raw meat, my body a mass of shooting pains. I took it meekly. I tried to guard my vitals, and my addled, star-riddled wits clung to the one idea: "I must not lose my temper."

I took my medicine. I did not lift a hand against them. I groveled on the deck like a cur and did not fight back.

It was hard to behave like that. It was the hardest thing I had ever done—keeping my temper and taking that beating without show of resistance. I was a fighting animal; never before in my life had I tamely turned

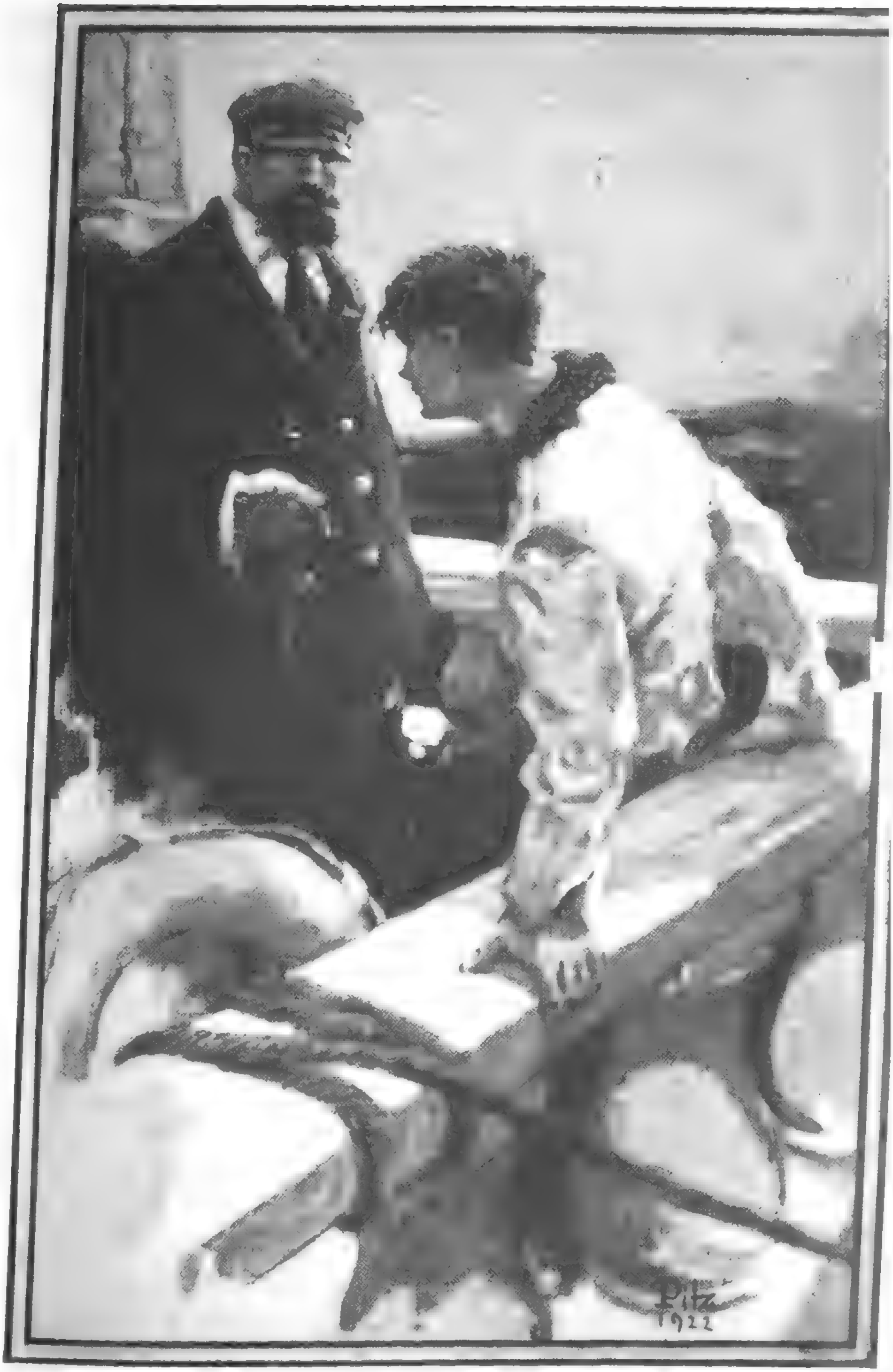
me was the
gleam in my
mere shadow
ted like cold
. I divined
re than sport
insults. He
eat rage, and
ddenly knew
of my losing

ir expression
nd said sub-

tongue, but
is minute."
ou've taken

eef in it a
ew he was
rned New-
"So now
skets," he
o bad you
ngue is a
not allow
I correct

stunning
uppercut.
and sent
zgibbon
Fitzgib-
od there
me and
I made
head in
let them



Never did Captain Swope remind me more of a cat than that instant when I met his glittering, pitiless eyes. I was his mouse, helpless, trapped.

the other cheek. Long afterward I came to realize that those few moments, during which I lay on the deck and felt their boots thud into my flesh, were educative moments of vital importance in my growth into manhood. I was learning self-control; it was being literally kicked into me. It was a lesson I needed, no doubt—but, oh, it was a bitter, bitter lesson!

They gave over their efforts finally. I had not much wit left in me, but I heard the captain's voice, faintly, as though he were at a distance, instead of bending over me.

"There's no fight in this rat," he said. "Might as well boot him off the poop, mister, and let him crawl into his hole. He's not dangerous—and the ship needs him as beef."

No sooner said than done. I had obligingly saved them the trouble of booting me very far, for I had been inching myself forward ever since the onslaught. When the captain spoke, I was almost at the head of the ladder to the main-deck—an instant after he spoke I was lying on the main-deck and all the stars in the universe were dancing before my eyes.

I got dizzily to my hands and knees and then to my feet and staggered for'ard. Captain Swope's soft voice followed me.

"Next time reef your tongue before you open your mouth!" he called.

I MADE my way into the fo'c's'le, and my mates grabbed me and swabbed and kneaded my hurts and swore their sympathy. My injuries were not serious—some nasty gashes about the head and face and innumerable bruises upon the body. But, fortunately, my bones were intact and I was in no way disabled—in a far better case, they told me, than poor Holy Joe, who was that minute lying in his bunk unconscious and with a broken arm and most of his teeth gone.

The men were, I soon saw, quite wild with rage and anxiety. From the sounds that came in through the fo'c's'le door, I could tell that the mate was hazing his watch at work; but I did not need to see his men to know their temper. I could tell from the attitude of my own watch how the other watch felt.

The stiffs were plainly panicky, glowering, dangerous. The squareheads were hysterical with rage. They knew why Holy Joe had suffered—for their sake, for Nils' sake. The knowledge that Newman, upon whose cool, sane strength they had all, consciously or unconsciously, depended, was taken from them, was now completely at the common enemy's mercy, made them feel—every man Jack—that their backs were to the wall.

Just as soon as the blood was washed out of my eyes and I saw my mates' faces, just as quickly as the ringing in my ears subsided and I heard their voices, I knew that the moment was past when the peace could be kept in that ship. Only Newman himself could now have composed that crowd. For it was the elemental instinct of self-preservation that was swaying those men. Oh, there was sympathy for me, and for Holy Joe and Newman, and rage on our account—but there was also, underlying this sympathy and rage, a very terrible fear for themselves. Self-preservation—that's it. My shipmates, sailors and stiffs, had reached a pass where they were afraid not to take some violent and illegal action against the men in command of the ship. Their long misuse, the wrongs and indignities each man had suffered, the fate of Nils, the events of the afternoon had all culminated in the belief these men now had—good men and bad men both, remember—that they must revolt, that they must kill the men aft before the men aft killed them. There were other factors at work, of course—greed for gold and lust of revenge—but this simple, primal fear for their own skins was the determining factor in the situation.

I was, of course, much concerned for the parson. I went into the port fo'c's'le to look at him—and he looked bad, lying there unconscious. The squareheads had washed his face, but had not ventured to touch his arm. His face was in a shocking state, and I feared his body might be broken, as was Nils' body. He was much worse off than I; for he had not my iron muscles to withstand hard knocks or my skill in rough-and-tumble fighting.

"We'll have to get him aft, where the lady can attend to him—or else get her for'ard," I declared.

"No chance," answered Boston.

"If we take him aft, dey ban kill him," asserted one of the squareheads.

"She can't come for'ard; she's locked in her room," said another.

"How do you know that?" I cried.

"Cockney says so. He was there when the skipper locked her in," said Boston.

For an instant I forgot Holy Joe and his evil plight.

"What yarn did that cockney bring for'ard with him?" I demanded.

"Why, he was there when they got the big 'un," answered Blackie. "He was helpin' the steward break out a cask o' beef from the lazaret when they brought big 'un into the cabin, cuffed up, and with the drop on him. He says the hen squawked, and the old man shut her in her room. Then they kicked him out on deck, so he wouldn't see too much o' what was goin' on. He says they put the big 'un down in the lazaret, and they're goin' to croak him sure, and if we got any guts we'll go aft tonight and turn him loose. That's what Cockney says."

Well, I let myself go—verbally. I said things before my mates about that cockney, and I was only sorry Cockney was not there to hear them. I knew most of the hard words of three languages, and I used them all. Oh, it was a relief to give even verbal release to the ocean of hate and rage in my soul! I told the crowd what I thought of Cockney. Then I told them why. I told them what had really happened in the cabin, what Cockney really was.

They believed me. They knew me; they knew I would not lie in such a case; they could not help but sense the sincerity of my loathing. They knew Cockney also. They knew he was the sort to spy and perjure—a good many of them that sort themselves—and as soon as I paused for breath, this man and that began to recall certain suspicious acts of Cockney he had noticed. Aye; they believed me—and the curses heaped on Cockney's head were awful to the ear.

They had good reason to curse. My disclosure gave them a fresh fear. Consternation was in their faces and voices, especially in the faces and voices of the stiffs. I knew very well what frightened them. Cockney had been most violent and outspoken among those advocating mutiny, far more outspoken than the cautious Blackie or Boston, and the disaffected had naturally confided in him. I knew that every man in the crew who had expressed a willingness to revolt was known by name to Cockney—and without doubt to Swope—and these men now could not escape the feeling that they were marked men. If anything had been needed to settle the conviction of the fo'c's'le that mutiny and murder were necessary, this unmasking of Cockney supplied the need.

I FELT this, rather than thought it out. It was in the air, so to speak. At the moment I was too much concerned for the little parson to reason coolly. Oh, I reasoned about it a little while later, not coolly, perhaps, but certainly quickly, and leaped helter-skelter to a momentous decision. But just then I thought about Holy Joe.

I wanted to get his arm set and his body examined. I myself was not competent to do either. The squarehead had spoken truth—it would be madness to carry the man aft for treatment—and I judged Cockney had spoken truly, too, when he said the lady was locked up. That agreed with what I myself had heard. I appealed to the crowd.

"We've got to get Holy Joe fixed up. Any of you know anything about bonesetting? Who'll lend a hand?"

To my surprise, Boston volunteered.

"I worked in a hospital once," he said.

He set to work immediately in an efficient, businesslike manner. I was astonished. His fingers were as deft—though not as gentle—as Newman's. I thought, as I tore a blanket into strips under his direction, how characteristic it was of the fellow to let a hurt shipmate lie unattended when he possessed the skill to help him.

"A clean break; no trick to set it," he announced, after examining the arm. Nor was it. We cut up a bunk-board for splints and used the blanket for bandages and triced the injured member in short order. Boston was deft, but he didn't try to spare his patient any pain; when he snapped the ends of the bone together, Holy Joe came out of his swoon with a cry of agony.

He half raised himself and looked at us.

"Let there be no trouble, boys—for God's sake, no fighting!" he said. Then he fainted away again.

We undressed him and Boston pronounced his ribs sound. Then we carried him into the starboard fo'c's'le and placed him in my bunk, which had a comfortable mattress.

"Now you see what he got," said Boston, wiping his hands on his greasy pants. "And you see what you got. And you know what happened to the big 'un. Well, how about it, Shreve? Do you stand with us?"

"With the crowd, sink or swim—that's what we want to know?" added Blackie.

I SIZED them up. Sailors and stiffs, they stood shoulder to shoulder. There was no longer a division in that crowd. And they looked to me to lead them.

I was thinking desperately, trying to discover a course that would help Newman. So I tried to put the crowd off.

"You heard what Holy Joe said?" I asked.

"He's balmy—and besides what d'ye think a parson would say?" said Boston. "Now, here's the lay, Shreve; we got to put a stop to this sort o' work." He pointed to the bunk that held the parson. "That means we got to take charge of this hooker," he went on. "All hands are agreed to it. But where do you stand—with us or against us?"

I made my plea for peace, knowing beforehand it was useless.

"How about Newman?" I said. "You know as well as I that the skipper is out to kill him. And I have Newman's word for it that the old man wants to kill the lady, too. He's just waiting for an excuse. That's why he's dressing us down this way, and hazing us raw—so we'll mutiny and give him the excuse he needs. Can't you see that?"

"He'll croak 'em, anyway—and maybe we can save them," retorted Boston.

"No; Lynch won't allow it," said I. "He's for the big fellow and the lady. The old man will not dare do it unless we give him the chance by attacking the cabin, because Lynch would testify against him at the inquiry. The old man has logged Newman as a mutineer, and our going aft would make him out one. As it is, Lynch is standing up for him—and for us."

But this was too much for the crowd to swallow.

"Lynch for us? By God, when I have my knife in his gullet—then he'll be for us!" swore Blackie, and the chorus of emphatic approvals which followed this statement showed what the rest thought.

"The last thing Newman said to me when I relieved him," I went on, "was to prevent this trouble. He said his life and hers depended on our keeping quiet."

"And how about us—how about our lives?" demanded Boston. "That damned murderer aft is out to croak us, too, ain't he—all of us he can spare? Look what he's done already! No, by God; we're going to put a stop to it—and we want to know if you are with us?"

I tried sarcasm.

"I suppose you'll end it by walking aft and letting them empty their shotguns into you. I suppose you'll chase them overboard, guns and all, with your cute little knives and your belaying-pins! Good Lord, men, have you gone crazy? If I hadn't overheard Cockney, I suppose he'd have led you aft—and got half of you filled with shot. As it is, they know you are talking mutiny, and they will be expecting you. You can't surprise them—and what can you do against their guns?"

Blackie cursed Cockney in a way to curdle the blood. Then he made plain the fear that was driving the men.

"They know we are talkin' mutiny—yes; and what's more, they know *who's* talkin' mutiny."

"We got to do it now, guns or no guns—ain't that right, mates?" said some one.

"And the money, too," added Blackie artfully. "Enough of it aft there to set us all up for gents."

Boston plucked me by the sleeve.

"Me and Jack are going to have a few words private," said he to the rest. "He's with us—no fear—a feller like Jack Shreve stands by his mates. Come on, Jack."

I went with him willingly. I was anxious to hear what he had to say "private." I was even more anxious to get away from the crowd for a few moments and think out some scheme whereby I could avert the impending catastrophe.

Boston led me up on the fo'c's'le head, and we sat down upon an anchor-stock.

"We ain't such fools as you think, Blackie and me," he began abruptly. "We ain't going to face guns with knives—not us. But guns to guns—well, that's different."

"What do you mean?" I demanded. "Have you got a gun?"

In answer he lifted my hand and placed

it over his dungaree jacket. I felt something hard, of irregular shape, beneath the thin cloth, the outline of a revolver.

"It ain't the only one," he assured me. "Two brace we came on board with—and we weren't drunk, you bet! We hid them safe before them fellers aft went through the dunnage. And Cockney didn't find out about them, either. They don't know aft that we're heeled, too. The rest o' the gang ain't acquainted with the fact yet, either. We'll let them know when the time comes."

He paused and looked at me inquiringly.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well!" he echoed. "Well, just this: a gang that has guts enough to face shotguns with sheath-knives is a pretty tough gang, ain't it? And it'll be a lot tougher when it finds out it has four guns of its own and plenty o' shells. And it kind of evens up the chances, doesn't it?"

I was thinking fast. All chance to keep the peace was gone, I realized. Unless——

"We ain't going to let them fellers slaughter us; don't you worry none about that," went on Boston. "This ain't the first gun-play me and Blackie has took part in, you bet! He's a dead shot, and I'm a good one. We got it all planned out, Blackie and me. We never intended going aft like the Cockney wanted us to. We're going to lay low, behind cover, and pick 'em off—the mates, and old Swope, too, if he shows his blasted head. Then, how will them sailmakers and carpenters be, with their boss gone? They'll be rattled—that's how they'll be. We can rush 'em then—and if a few of our fellers swaller lead—why, there'll be the fewer to share the swag."

"Newman—" I began.

"We'll do the best we can for the big 'un," says Boston. "We need him. We'll try and get the old man first pop—and if we have luck plunking the mates, it'll be over so quick nobody can hurt the big 'un."

I thought, and was silent.

"What's holding you back?" demanded Boston. "I know you ain't afraid. Look here, Shreve; you know you can't hold the crowd back. You and Blackie and me could all be against it, and still they'd go aft. They're going to get Swope before Swope gets more o' them. And if it's the big 'un you're worrying about—why, we got to do this to save him. Look here; let me give you a tip, if the big 'un hasn't. When he come on board this ship, he found out something from the skipper's Moll that he wanted to find out, and now, if he gets ashore alive with what he found out, there'll be a sheriff's necktie party for Yankee Swope. That's what all this bloody business has been about. You can lay your last cent that Swope will get him if we don't get Swope."

"Boston, give me that gun," I said.

He took a look at my face, and smiled, satisfied. He drew the weapon from under his clothes, a long-barreled, heavy-caliber service Colt's and passed it to me. I thrust it out of sight beneath my own waistband.

"Now, I'm boss," I said. "I'll give the word."

His smile widened. This was what he wanted, as I well knew. Boston and Blackie could plan and instigate. But they could not lead that crowd. The sailors despised them; the stiffs hated and feared them only second to the afterguard. The precious pair needed me as leader. They flattered themselves, I dare say, that they could control me—or extinguish me when the time came.

FOR my part, I had made my decision. It was a desperate, a terrible decision. It was necessary that I pretend to fall in with Boston's plans if I were to execute my decision.

"When it gets dark, I am going aft—alone," I told him. "You and Blackie keep the crowd quiet, and for'ard of the house, until I return."

"What you going to do?" he asked.

"Make sure that Newman will be safe when we make the attack," I explained. "We must make sure of that—he's our navigator."

"That's so," he agreed. "But how'll you do it."

"I'll kill Captain Swope," I said.

How will the crew of the *Golden Bough* work out their desperate situation? And what will be the fate of Newman and the lady? See the concluding instalment of "The Blood-Ship," in August EVERYBODY'S—out July 15th.

What Galatea Said

There Is a Deal of Whimsy and Pathos in Fanny Orme as Mr. Cary Describes Her—Her Father, the Carpenter; Her First Job at Twelve Dollars a Week, and So Forth

By Lucian Cary

CABOT BROWN was a theatrical producer by profession, but he wasn't at all the usual sort. He was distinguished by his education, which was obtained at Harvard; by his appearance, which was tall and lean and gray at the temples, like one of his leading men, and by his hobby, which was discovering first-rate talent where nobody else could, or, at least, where nobody else had.

It was Cabot Brown who found Maizie Marchand—you know, the girl who took Ethel Barrymore's place last season and made such a hit. Brown found her teaching school in Iowa. Of course it isn't true that she jumped straight from holding down forty pupils who couldn't get away to charming fourteen hundred grown people who had paid to get in. Cabot Brown spent two whole years and more patience than most lion-tamers possess teaching that girl how to walk, and how to sit down (which is much harder), and how to say a line like, "I'm bored; aren't you?" in a tone and with a manner that would make you think the words witty and the speaker altogether lovable. (People outside the profession sometimes imagine that an effective line is the work of the playwright, but all actresses know better.)

It was Cabot Brown who discovered Tillie Trumbull. She was a waitress in a Childs restaurant—which makes Cabot Brown's feat all the more remarkable. He was a man who never lunched for less than five dollars.

Finally, it was Cabot Brown who discovered Fanny Orme. Oddly enough, that was her real name, and so good a one for stage purposes that he had no intention of changing it. At least, he hadn't any intention of changing it at first.

You never heard of Fanny Orme? Of course not. For, after all, that's the point.

Fanny Orme's father was a good carpenter, and a steady sort, and the other children were much younger and consequently inexpensive; so Fanny danced her way through the high school and went to Wabash Business College to learn shorthand and typewriting as a matter of course. But while Fanny was still struggling with the intricacies of pothooks and the exasperations of the touch system, John Orme fell off the roof of Shelby's new barn and broke his arm in two places and tore the ligaments irreparably.

The doctor set it elaborately, but he prophesied that it would be months in the healing and that it would never again serve for skilled work.

So Fanny Orme went to work in the button factory, which paid twelve dollars a week to start, and graced no more the Saturday-night dances in the K. P. hall over Utley's grocery store. She was too tired by Saturday night to dance. And perhaps she was too proud. She sold her party dress, that she had made herself, to Grace Fincke, for the price of a good, sober, solid pair of shoes—the kind you can stand up in all day. After that she stayed at home evenings and didn't bother to change after supper from the old black skirt and the black-cotton blouse she wore at the machine nine hours a day, six days a week.

Fanny Orme had been standing at the sorting-machine for nearly a year when

Cabot Brown dropped off the Twentieth Century from New York at Elkhart and caught the Monon south for Belleville. He was going to deliver a lecture before the Twentieth Century Club of Belleville on "What the Theatre Means to Me."

Cabot Brown was not in the habit of delivering lectures before women's clubs in little Indiana towns. It was a matter of sentiment with him to visit Belleville when he could. On his first trip out with a road company doing one-night stands, when he was fresh from college and knew more about Calderon and Lope de Vega than he did about the theatrical business, he had got stranded in Belleville and the manager of the Belleville Opera House had loaned him two hundred dollars. Cabot Brown had repaid the loan with interest, but he had never forgotten it. And now that he was a millionaire and had a theatre of his own in London besides the three he controlled in New York, he liked to visit the sleepy little town with the wide streets and the spreading elms and the quaint content.

It gave him a sense of pride and power to walk these streets and remember the first time he had seen them—the night he had walked miles of them while he got up nerve enough to ask old Henry Hickman for the two hundred dollars. That was why he came all the way from New York to lecture on "What the Theatre Means to Me," and that was why he made a point of arriving in Belleville the night before he was expected. He wanted the evening in which to pay himself homage, and he did not intend to announce himself to Mrs. Archibald Field, president of the Twentieth Century Club and wife of the president of the bank, and consequently his hostess, until the next morning.

So it was that he saw Fanny Orme, in her black-cotton blouse and her faded black skirt and without a hat, coming across Crawford Avenue on her way home from the button factory—saw her in that curious bath of light that sometimes follows a sunset on a spring evening in Indiana.

He stopped short, and his first thought was of a woman he had seen once in Valladolid, and his next of the "Morte d'Arthur" and the incomparable Guinevere.

Fanny Orme realized only that a man was following her, and, without looking over her shoulder, hastened her step.

Everybody's Magazine, July, 1922

It was an old experience for her—as perhaps it must be always for a factory-girl with red-gold hair and a profile that Paul Veronese should have drawn. Fanny walked so fast that she took it for granted she had outstripped the man, whoever he was. It was only when she stood on the narrow veranda of her own home and was in the act of reaching for the knob of the screen door that she turned to look.

Fanny gave a small gasp—a quick-drawn breath.

The man was coming up the walk—a tall, fine-looking and elegantly dressed man, swinging a Malacca stick.

"How do you do?" said Fanny Orme, her hand on the door-knob. He didn't look like a bill-collector, nor yet like somebody selling subscription books, even books *de luxe*, a dollar down and a dollar a month for one hundred and twelve months.

The man raised his hat.

"I beg your pardon," he said in purest Harvardese; "but is your father at home?"

"I—I think he is," Fanny said. She knew he was at home; he had just got a job as night watchman at the match factory and he didn't go on till eight o'clock.

"I'd very much like to meet him," said the tall and elegant stranger.

"I'll see," Fanny said, and ran into the house and called her father.

JOHN ORME put on his coat and stepped out on the veranda, a slow-moving, formidable man, with an arm that showed crooked only when you looked for it.

"What can I do for you, brother?" John Orme asked in the quaint and friendly Hoosier phrase.

Fanny stood just inside the doorway where she could hear every word and yet couldn't be seen.

"I want to talk to you about your daughter," the man said coolly. He took a pigskin case out of his pocket and handed John Orme a calling-card.

John Orme frowned over the card and smiled slowly.

"Well?" he said.

"I'm Cabot Brown, the theatrical producer. I own three theatres in New York and one in London. I think your daughter can act—and I'm supposed to know about these things."

John Orme's frown deepened.

"I'm in Belleville to deliver a lecture before the Twentieth Century Club," Mr. Brown continued. "I can refer you to Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Field."

John Orme motioned to the two chairs that stood on the veranda with their backs against the house.

"Sit down," he said.

Fanny, her heart thumping, fluttered on tiptoe from the dark little hall to the dark little parlor and stood in the window-frame behind the wire screen.

"I didn't suppose," her father was saying, "that Fanny would photograph well—she says her features are too irregular."

Fanny bit her lip. She wanted to call out to her father, to tell him quickly that this man wasn't interested in the movies. She knew that much.

"I'm not a moving-picture producer," Mr. Brown explained. "I produce plays—so that's not of the slightest consequence."

"H-m-m-m," said John Orme.

Cabot Brown told briefly—and with becoming modesty—the story of how he had discovered and developed Maizie Marchand, while John Orme listened with a kind of intensity, as if he knew there must be something wrong. Neither man heard Fanny's pounding heart and quick breathing behind the window-frame, but both of them must have been aware how much this talk would mean to her.

When Cabot Brown had finished, John Orme sat silent. He shifted his position uneasily. He took out his pipe and filled it and lit it—all without saying a word. Fanny's heart almost stopped beating now. She knew how immovable her father was once he had made a decision.

"Just—just what is your proposition, Mr. Brown?" he said at last.

"It's very simple," Mr. Brown answered. "I will pay your daughter fifty dollars a week and all her expenses for one year. During that time I will teach her all I can. At the end of that period I shall know whether it is worth while to go on—if it is, I will double her salary. If she works hard and learns fast and gets on, she will soon earn two or three or four times that much."

John Orme puffed slowly at his pipe for a long minute.

"It sounds almost—too good, Mr. Brown," he said.

"Then perhaps I ought to tell you, Mr. Orme, that if my proposition is accepted, I expect to make money on it."

"The point," said John Orme, "is that I don't know if I want Fanny to go off to New York and be an actress. I don't know anything about you at all."

"I appreciate your feeling, Mr. Orme," said Cabot Brown. "And I very much wish that you would consult Mr. and Mrs. Field before you come to a decision."

Mr. Brown rose and picked up his stick.

Fanny struggled with an almost irresistible desire to cry out, to cough, to attract their attention in some apparently inadvertent way.

Breathes there a woman with soul so dead that she has never believed she could be a great actress?

"I will," said John Orme.

"Thank you," said Cabot Brown.

The two men shook hands.

A moment later, as John Orme stepped back into the little hall, Fanny threw both arms round his neck.

"Oh, father," she cried, "you *will* let me, won't you?"

Her father patted her shoulder.

"That depends," he said soberly.

"Oh, father," Fanny cried, "I knew you would!"

A YEAR later, almost to a day, Cabot Brown told Fanny Orme the truth. He called that spring noon—one of those May noontides when Fifth Avenue sparkles as no other street can sparkle and the big cars are packed so close on Murray Hill that it takes twenty minutes to go from the Waldorf to Forty-fourth Street—at the little apartment in Park Avenue to take Fanny to lunch and to decide the terms on which they would renew their contract.

It was outwardly a very different Fanny who received him—a Fanny whose every point, from the way she carried her head to the way she placed her feet when she sat down, had been studied by the best eyes in Manhattan, a Fanny whose clothes were as intimately a part of her whole effect as her red-gold hair, a Fanny who had learned the job of being a beauty and was now acquiring the inward poise that makes beauty matter.

Not that she was inwardly at war with herself, or even at loose ends. You would have felt at once her youth; you would have said, "There is the *élan vital.*" Only, if you were very acute indeed, and only after you had spent an hour with her, would you have felt a question in her, a something she had not settled with herself.

She was dressed in a cool street frock—one of those frocks so simple that only the beautiful may wear them and only the rich may pay for them. She gave her hand to Cabot Brown now as an equal, or perhaps as a great lady—a great lady who chose to be gracious, a great lady who was so sure of herself that she could be simple and human and friendly—might have done. Only, she wasn't a great lady—she was little Fanny Orme with a profile that Paul Veronese should have drawn and a question in her heart.

"How do you like me?" she asked.

"You know—or you wouldn't ask," said Cabot Brown.

Fanny shook her head.

"No," she said. "You still puzzle me."

"You really don't know that you've done so much better than the others that I shouldn't think of comparing you with them—that you're my greatest triumph already."

Fanny sat down.

"No," she said. She wasn't sure even now that he wasn't just encouraging her. Cabot Brown frowned and, frowning sat down opposite her.

"I'll have to tell you the truth," he said bluntly.

"Yes?"

"I don't want you to be an actress—I haven't for six months."

Fanny looked at him—and for the moment didn't know whether she was glad or sorry. But her breath came a little faster.

"Fanny," he went on, "did you ever hear the story of Pygmalion and Galatea?"

"No," said Fanny.

"Pygmalion was a sculptor who carved a beautiful woman in the marble—a woman so perfect that he fell in love with her and begged the gods to bring her to life. And the gods granted his prayer. They brought her to life; they made his dream come true."

Fanny's eyes dropped.

"Is that—all?" she asked, after a moment.

"That's all," said Cabot Brown.

"But—" Fanny's lips were slightly parted and her heart was pounding the way it had pounded that day she had stood in the little dark parlor and listened to the talk between her father and Cabot Brown on the veranda—"but what did Galatea say?"

"The legend doesn't tell," said Cabot Brown. "And that's what I want to know."

Fanny raised her eyes briefly and saw that he was in earnest.

"I didn't know it that night I saw you crossing Crawford Avenue on your way home from the factory—I thought I saw a theatrical possibility in you. But the truth is I fell in love with you on sight—or, at any rate, with the vision of you I had then. Ever since, I've pictured you as you might be. I've dreamed of you, and the dream is just as clear now as if it had really happened. I see you at the end of a long room at the piano in a black gown in the late summer light—just enough light to touch the red-gold in your hair and give your profile in relief and bring a gleam to one white shoulder. That's my dream of you, Galatea. Will you make it come true?"

"I—I don't know if I can!" Fanny cried. She liked Cabot Brown. She admired Cabot Brown. But did she love him?

And now he leaned forward, and his eyes were very grave and appealing.

"Fanny," he said softly, "will you—could you—try?"

Fanny looked up at him brightly and her lashes were wet.

"I'd—I'd love to try," she said.

She thought, of course, he would kiss her then. But he did not.

"That's all I ask—all I could ask," he said quickly. "And now we have some arrangements to make. I'm sailing on the *Aquitania* next week. I'm going to send you up to Martha's Vineyard to spend the month with my sister—she's to have my house up there. You'll find a lot of young people you'll like, and I'll be back in July. Is that all right?"

"Of course," said Fanny Orme.

And then—they were standing opposite each other—of an impulse toward romance, Fanny raised her lips to be kissed. Cabot Brown bent low and kissed her forehead very gently—almost reverently.

IT WAS rather exciting at first, meeting a lot of young people who had always had money and who accepted her as one of themselves and were as nice to her as a group of young people can ever be to a beautiful outsider. And Cabot Brown's sister was the kindliest of old maids. But gradually the tennis and the bathing-hour and the dancing palled on Fanny. She took to walking far up the beach alone. She wanted to think, but she didn't know what she wanted to think about. Sometimes she thought she was just homesick—homesick for Crawford Avenue.

SHE was sitting one afternoon in the shadow of a dune, looking out over the Atlantic rolling in, when a young man came striding along the hard beach.

He was a young man bronzed by the sun and wind to the color of dark mahogany—a young man without a hat, and dressed in worn and baggy flannels.

Fanny watched him out of the corner of her eye. He was walking fast, his head down. But as he came opposite her—they weren't a yard apart—he raised his eyes.

"Why, hello there!" he said.

Fanny smiled. He had so obviously spoken on impulse, and now he was very much embarrassed.

"I—I beg your pardon," he said quickly.

"You needn't," Fanny said.

The young man looked at her, puzzled and inquiring. And then he smiled.

"Would—may I sit down?" he asked.

"Yes," Fanny said. "I want to talk."

She sat speechless a long time after the young man had sat down. She had surprised herself. She hadn't realized she wanted to talk. She certainly hadn't intended to tell a strange young man she wanted to talk.

"Well," the young man said finally, "I'm listening."

"I know," Fanny said. "But—well—you see, I didn't intend to say that at all, and now I don't know if I want to talk—or not."

"What did you want to talk about?" the young man asked gently.

Fanny looked at him. He had honest eyes and a sensitive face and a lean jaw. Somehow, she trusted him.

"Everything," she said.

The young man smiled.

"Of course," he said. "That's what I want to talk about, too."

"Do you think—one ought to?" Fanny asked.

"If one can," the young man said, "one certainly ought to."

Fanny smiled a rueful little smile, and before she knew it she had begun with those days in the Belleville high school when she had danced of Saturday nights in the K. P. hall over Utley's grocery store, and, going on to her year at the sorting-machine in the button factory, and Cabot Brown, she told the whole story very simply and quite honestly—omitting only the names.

"And now," she finished, "I don't know—I don't know what's the matter—but—" She paused.

"You aren't happy," the young man finished.

"No," said Fanny Orme. "I have everything to make a girl happy—and I'm not. I suppose I'm awfully stupid."

"No," the young man said. He was sitting with his arms round his knees looking out across the ocean.

"He's really a fine person," Fanny said. "Only—I just don't believe I could ever really please him."

They fell silent, and for ten minutes neither spoke, but both looked out over the sea.

"You see," Fanny continued, "he knows everything. He knows about how you ought to talk and how you ought to walk and how you ought to sit. He knows all about the theatre and people and books and painting and music and food and clothes and—well, everything. And he's perfectly willing to teach me everything—there's just no limit to his patience. The trouble is, I just know I can't ever learn everything—even if I live to be a hundred. He says I've got on very well so far, but he doesn't see that I've almost reached my limit. And I pretend."

Fanny looked at the young man to see how he took this last confession. There was a faint trace of a smile at the corners of his mouth.

"I pretend," Fanny went on. "I pretend I understand things I don't understand at all. I—I even pretend I've read books I haven't read. And when I talk to him, I'm scared to death all the time for fear I'll——"

"Pull a boner?" the young man suggested.

Fanny laughed. Cabot Brown never used slang.

"And sometimes I do," she confessed.

"Does he ball you out?"

"Oh, never!" Fanny cried. "I'd feel better if he did. But he doesn't ever ball me out. He pretends not to notice. But I see the pain in his face and I feel like—like a—" Fanny hesitated again for the word.

"Like a perfect dumb-bell."

Fanny giggled.

"Yes," she said.

The young man smiled at Fanny and Fanny smiled back, and some spark—the spark of mutual sympathy and understanding—leaped the gap between them.

Fanny glanced at the watch on her wrist. It was six o'clock.

"Oh," she cried, "I've got to go!"

"I'm awfully sorry," the young man said. "I wanted to tell you all about everything, too."

Fanny paused. She wouldn't have time to dress for dinner unless she hurried.

"Couldn't you come again?" she asked. "I could meet you here another day."

"May I come to-morrow?" the young man asked, and his tone was quick and eager.

"Do come to-morrow," Fanny said. "I'd like to help if I could. You've helped me by just listening and hardly saying anything at all."

With an impulse mutual and sudden they shook hands.

FANNY walked down the beach, thinking very hard as she walked, and trying to decide what it was that had made her trust the young man she had never seen before, and saying to herself that she would never mention him to anybody. Indeed, how could she? She didn't even know his name.

That night there was a wireless from Cabot Brown. He would arrive at Martha's Vineyard in two days.

Fanny tried to read Stendhal, because Cabot Brown had put him on the list of books she ought to know, but "The Red and the Black" seemed dull. She tried to read George Meredith's essay on Comedy, which he liked, but she couldn't. And then she found a poem of Alice Corbin's in a review and read it through three times, until she could remember one of the quatrains, and leaning back, the review in her lap, she repeated it softly to herself:

"The bud is lovely, but the tree in winter,
Though stark and bare,
Knows all the earth knows, and no love is perfect
Without despair."

Fanny wondered why that seemed so bitter and so beautiful.

The next afternoon, walking up the beach, Fanny saw the young man coming down. They met as by some fate at the very point where they had met the day before.

The young man's story was a simple enough one. He had fallen in love with a girl and got engaged to her, and then she had broken the engagement.

"I'm sorry," Fanny said.

The young man said nothing, but looked out over the Atlantic.

Fanny saw how shabby his coat was.

"Was—was it because you were poor?" she asked. She couldn't imagine any other reason for a girl's turning him down.

The young man shook his head.

"Oh, no," he said. "She didn't love me."

Fanny wondered if he knew the truth. She knew that if he knew the girl had turned him down because he was poor, he wouldn't say so—he would say, "Oh, no," just like that. And then she wondered if it wasn't money that made Cabot Brown seem so unreal—so different—so difficult to please.

"You see," the young man explained, "she knew what she wanted and what she didn't want. She didn't want what she called the 'vulgar things.' She thought so many things I liked were vulgar. She even thought babies were a little vulgar."

"Oh!" Fanny cried, before she thought. "How *could* she?"

"The worst of it is," the young man said, "that now, after thinking all these weeks that she was hard and cruel—now I've found out that I didn't love her. That's what really hurts." The young man smiled ruefully at Fanny. "She was just a little more honest than I was." He knitted his brows unhappily. "That does get under your skin, you know—to find you've been a liar."

Fanny looked gravely into his eyes. She thought in that moment that he was the truest man she had ever known.

"But," she asked, "but how do you know—now—that you didn't love her?"

The young man's smile had vanished. His eyes looked soberly back into Fanny's. And Fanny had the odd feeling that they stood on the very top of the globe, spinning in space for one timeless moment or eon, she didn't know which.

"I mean," she said quickly, to break the spell, "how can any one really know—that?"

"I know," the young man said slowly, "because I'm in love with you."

"Oh!" said Fanny.

And all in a flash she was in his arms and he was kissing her mouth, and she didn't even know his name or anything about him at all except that she loved him—and Cabot Brown was coming to-morrow.

IT WAS seven o'clock, and dinner was at seven-thirty. Fanny walked down the room in her black gown, her red-gold hair piled high, and took her seat at the piano.

Cabot Brown sat far down the room, his head in his hands, watching her.

Fanny pressed the switch—it was a player-piano, of course—and began to play Chopin. You remember Opus 31?

It says—at least it said to Fanny—what the poem in the review had said:

Too bright, too new, too shallow and unconscious
Is young love's heat.
Give me the love that knows the bitter wisdom
Of love's defeat—
Give me the love that grows through time's own wisdom,
More hard, more sweet.

Fanny wanted to be hard—and sweet.

She played it all through, and then she rose and turned toward Cabot Brown.

He came down the room toward her, and she trembled and thought she was going to cry—and couldn't.

"Fanny," he said, "you've made the dream come true."

Fanny shrank from him—she felt suddenly very weak and very little—but when Cabot Brown put his arms round her, she let her head sink on his breast.

"Galatea!" he whispered. "My Galatea! Will you marry me?"

And Fanny Orme thought how much she owed him—she owed him everything really—and she had no other way to repay him—no other way at all.

"I—I just can't," she said, and broke into wild sobs.

They stood there, Cabot Brown holding her tightly in his arms and Fanny sobbing on his shoulder, when a voice broke in.

Cabot Brown turned to face the intruder. He stood menacingly in the doorway, anger in his face and anger in every line of his tense young body. Fanny stole one look at him and sobbed harder than ever.

"What do you mean?" Cabot Brown asked coldly. "What are you doing in my house?"

"It doesn't matter whose house it is," the young man said sharply. "She's my girl."

Cabot Brown dropped his arms. Fanny raised her head.

"It's true," she said.

For a long moment none of the three spoke.

"I'm so ashamed and so sorry and—and so glad," Fanny began. "I—I thought"—she looked up at Cabot Brown—"I thought I loved you enough to marry you, but I didn't know what love was till yesterday. And you've done so much for me and I don't know how I can ever pay you back—even the money—but—but I never did want to be rich, anyway. I want to be poor."

"Poor!" said Cabot Brown. "Don't you know who this young man is?"

"No," Fanny said. "I only know I love him."

The young man stood silent.

"Why," said Cabot Brown, "that's young Joe Hitchcock, and he's got at least five times as much money as I have."

The young man's face blanched a little, but his voice was firm.

"It's true," he said. "I'm not poor."

"I don't care!" Fanny cried. "I'm not afraid of you."

And that's why you never saw the name of Fanny Orme in electric lights on Broadway.

The Soul-Scar

A THREE-PART serial by **Beldon Duff**, author of "Twenty-four Hours," will begin in the August issue—out July 15th. Who is Beldon Duff? *See Chimney Corner, page 179.*

The First Fifty Years

A Unique Play with Marriage for Its Theme. On Whom Do You Think Lies the Greater Responsibility for the Way this Union Turns Out—the Husband or the Wife?

By Henry Myers

Published by courtesy of the author and the producers, Hart & Strouse

Martin and *Anne Wells* were married in 1872. The play opens with the return from the honeymoon to the little home *Martin* has bought in Harlem.

MARTIN (*seats himself and sighs with satisfaction*): Home, and married to you! I feel richer than Russell Sage, with all his money. I always hoped for a real love-match, but I never dared to think it was possible. And yet, here we are—actually married—actually returned from two weeks of heaven! I—I—(*his voice breaks, he almost sobs*)—I don't deserve such happiness.

ANNE (*puts her arm round his neck*): You'll make me cry, dearest.

MARTIN: They're sweet tears. When you accepted me, I thought I was dreaming. I had nothing to offer you.

ANNE (*fondly*): Nothing but yourself, Martin. Did you think I'd refuse you because you aren't wealthy?

MARTIN: I wish I could afford a hired girl for you.

ANNE: I don't mind work if it's for you.

MARTIN: Well, if I stick to my job good and hard and get a raise, then in about——

ANNE: Oh, don't let's go into nasty money matters so soon. I feel as if I'm worrying you. (*She smoothes his hair.*) Don't wrinkle your brow on my account. I don't care about money. I only want you to love me.

MARTIN: Anne, you're perfect! (*Kisses her.*) You're the most wonderful——

ANNE (*not displeased*): No, no, no!

MARTIN: But you are! I suppose every husband thinks he's married the finest girl in the world, but in my case it just happens to be true; that's all. I've never seen any one so clever—so accomplished— Why, the way you play the piano——

ANNE (*deprecatingly*): What do I play? Mendelssohn's "Spring Song" and the "Maiden's Prayer."

MARTIN: But the *way* you play them! I could listen to those two pieces forever. You have a certain tone and touch that can't be taught. If you would practise——

ANNE: Well, I will to please you, but I'll never amount to anything. It's *you* that are the accomplished one.

MARTIN (*modestly*): Oh, if you mean those silly little poems of mine——

ANNE (*indignantly*): Silly, indeed! Martin Wells, I want you to make up a poem about *me*, and right this instant!

MARTIN: Well, all right—if you really want me to. (*Writes.*)

Oh, Anne, I wish you knew
How absolutely I am the slave of you——

(*Doubtfully.*) I'm afraid I've put in too many syllables somewhere.

ANNE: If you write the syllables, there can't be too many of them to please me.

MARTIN (*writes*):

And the reason why you sometimes blush,
Is because you also love me very much.

(*Uncertainly.*) Does that rime?

Anne: It nearly rimes. Anyway, what do rimes matter? It's your beautiful thought. You think *I'm* perfect. *You* are!

Martin: Don't let's argue about it. Let's just love, you little imp! (*A long kiss.*) Don't you feel sorry for Harold?

Anne (*surprised*): Sorry for Harold? No! Why should I be? I simply didn't love *him*. He'll get over it. He's going abroad to live.

Martin: Or to forget. Poor fellow! (*Takes a letter from his pocket. Then, very seriously.*) Anne, there was one moment in my life when I almost regretted having married you. That was when this letter came.

Anne (*surprised*): Harold has written to you?

Martin: To both of us. (*Reads the letter.*)

> Dear Martin and Anne: I would not write this to any one in the world but you two. I sail for Australia to-day, and the only thing this world will let me take along is the hope that you will be happy. I want this to be the one marriage that turned out successfully, so I offer a bit of advice, and if you love me, take it. You know that wedding anniversaries have always been considered red-letter days from the first—the paper wedding—to the fiftieth—the golden. On each of the anniversaries I want you to consider your ways, and be sure that you are still in love. Promise one another now that you will question your hearts, and on each anniversary I will write to you. Your friend forever,
>
> Harold.

Anne: Our anniversaries! Martin, let's do it!

Martin: Gladly—although it won't be necessary. *This* marriage will be a success. All these cynics who make fun of love-matches are wrong. You can't live on love! Consider the future! That's all we've been hearing. We can live on love. When our anniversaries come around, we'll prove it.

Anne: It isn't as if we were like other married couples. Most of them don't know what love means.

Martin: *Most* of them? Not one of them knows!

Anne (*with blissful anticipation*): What will our hearts tell us when we question them the first time?

Martin: The first, last and all will be the same. Our hearts will tell us that we're sweethearts, and that our life will be one long honeymoon. We shall always answer that question like this. (*Kisses her.*)

A YEAR rolls round, and their first anniversary finds *Anne* and *Martin* with their enthusiasm somewhat dulled. The housework that she contemplated with such eagerness has degenerated into drudgery. She has even begun to question *Martin's* business ability, since it has brought him no advancement. She has gotten careless in her dress, and *Martin* has become the tired business man in his home. He often gets impatient at *Anne's* slackness, and to-night, when they have been invited out, he learns that she has forgotten to put his collars in the wash.

Martin: Oh, how could you be so careless? I'll have to keep on the same one. I hope it won't look dirty.

Anne: There is so much to do, I forgot.

Martin: But collars——

Anne: I know; but I don't get time for everything. I don't even practise the piano any more. I just play my two pieces every once in a while.

Martin: Those same two? Don't you ever get tired of hearing them?

Anne: Oh, they're all right.

Martin: All right? I should think that a pianist with real taste would like variety.

Anne: They say that the finest concert-pianists work at pieces for years. If such artists as Lizst and Rubinstein——

Martin: Does Lizst play the "Maiden's Prayer"?

Anne: We can't all be artists.

Martin: Artists! I'm neglecting what art *I* have. I've written exactly two poems in three months.

Anne: What's the difference, if the magazines don't buy them?

Martin: Oh, editors don't know everything.

Anne: Genuine talent would attract *some* attention.

The door-bell rings, and *Anne* answers with a show of eagerness. It is an anniversary letter, but not the expected one from Harold.

Anne: Maybe the ship from Australia is delayed. Harold wouldn't forget *us*.

Martin: We'll never forget him; that's sure.

Anne: I'll always keep his letter.

Martin: Which letter?

Anne: The one he wrote us on our honeymoon. I put it in the clock. (*Goes over to it.*) It must still be there.

THIS play tells the story of the married life of *Martin Wells* (Tom Powers) and his wife, *Anne* (Clare Eames). They do not find happiness, yet they have their reasons for not breaking the tie. Responsibility for their failure will be laid by some on the husband and by others on the wife. Above (left), we see the return from the honeymoon (1872). *Martin* says, "Our life will be one long honeymoon." On the right is a scene from the wooden-wedding anniversary (1877). In the heat of a violent quarrel, *Martin* says, "If you dare speak to me again, I'll strangle you!" The other picture shows them ten years later. *Anne* has decided to leave *Martin*, but he, recovering from an illness, begs her not to. She agrees, and he accepts her terms—that they live as strangers, not enemies.

Photographs by White Studio.

Martin: I'll be hanged if *I* remember it. What was in it?

Anne: I don't know. Congratulations or something. (*Takes it out and reads from it.*) "Dear Martin and Anne: I would not write this to any one in the world but you two—" (*Seeing that Martin is looking over her shoulder, she stops, and both read it in silence.*) "That you will question your hearts—" (*She looks up.*) Martin—are we still really and truly in love?

Martin (*protestingly*): Oh, now, Anne, if you're going to be sentimental about it——

Anne: Well, put it like this: Have we stopped honeymooning?

Martin: Good God, I hope so! We can't be holding hands forever. We used to be rather idiotic about that. You hear an awful lot of bosh about love at first sight. The cold truth is, physical attraction brought us together. We didn't know it then, but we do now. Come; let's admit it.

Anne: But we *are* married, and we're fond of each other, call it what you will. Maybe we weren't practical; but what can we do about it?

Martin (*earnestly*): I want to understand your notions of life, and I want you to understand mine. It seems to me we ought to help each other more—to work with the same ends in view— Do you understand, my darling?

Anne: You mean that we should be—er—comrades?

Martin: Comrades! That's it exactly. That will *really* bring us together.

They shake hands and kiss on it.

Anne: Comrades ought to help each other. Perhaps a little well-meant criticism——

Martin: Quite so. Neither of us is perfect. It's our duty to point out our failings. Now, if you were more sympathetic, and neat——

Anne: *Neat?* You ought to talk! Why the way you throw your clothes around——

Martin: I have other things to think of besides clothes. It's up to you to tend to all that.

And so on. These occasions are not usually distinguished by originality of subject or expression, and *Anne* and *Martin* are very average. He criticizes her for stinting on the table. She resents it hotly, and calls it economy which she would be glad to renounce if he were more energetic in business and brought home more money.

Martin: You don't understand. It isn't merit alone that counts in business. You must have influence—powerful friends——

Anne: I'm just commenting. You asked for frankness.

Martin: Yes; but this is mere faultfinding.

They pull themselves up on the brink of a row.

Anne: I guess we were bound to have a little spat. Don't let's have another.

Martin: We'll get along all right. We're as well off as most. Our marriage hasn't turned out so badly.

BY THEIR fifth anniversary, things have reached a pretty state.

As the door slams on the guests who have been helping celebrate the occasion, *Martin* abruptly drops his company manners:

Martin: Well, of all the disagreeable dinner-parties, this wins the prize! I thought they'd never go home. (*Looks at clock.*) After midnight. Some people have no sense. (*Sinks into a chair.*)

Anne: It was your idea. What are you growling about?

Martin: It was *not* my idea.

Anne: You suggested it. You invited them.

Martin: Five years married! It feels like five hundred.

Anne: To me also, I assure you. (*Picks cigar-stubs from floor.*) Why can't men put their dirty cigar-stubs on their plates? They throw their ashes on the floor; that's their idea of celebrating.

Martin: Celebrating! I don't see what there was to celebrate.

Anne: Well, the party's over now; so shut up!

Martin: If you're trying to pick a fight with me again, you won't succeed.

Anne: I'm trying to do only one thing, and that's clear up this mess.

Martin: Well, clear it up. Am *I* supposed to? Don't I work hard enough all day?

Anne: You're not supposed to do anything at all. You did quite enough at dinner. I don't know whether I can get it through your thick skull, but the next time you're asked to recite, *don't* recite one of your own poems.

Martin: They asked me to. Could I refuse?

Anne: You didn't have to select an indecent one.

Martin: Indecent? (*With a slight sneer.*) Since when are you so prudish? I had a slightly different idea of you.

Anne: You might at least close the piano while I'm clearing up.

Martin: Why? You opened it.

Anne: I was asked to play.

Martin: Not by me. Some poor devil of a music teacher must have had a hard time getting those two pieces into your head. You aren't sure of them even now. The idea of holding up such piano-playing as if it were an accomplishment!

Anne: Your sister's putting you up to this. It's the last time that woman sets foot in *this* house.

Martin: She'll come into my house as often as she pleases. (*With cold seriousness.*) Look here, Anne; you don't regret our marriage nearly as much as I do. You've led me a dog's life. Pestering me for money, humiliating me before my friends——

Anne: You humiliate yourself when you read obscene poetry.

Martin: Ah! I understand. Since you've lost every other claim to my affection, you want to pretend modesty. But if you hadn't become so coarse, I might try to spare your sensibilities a little more.

Anne: Perhaps I *am* coarse! Why shouldn't I be? I'm leading the life of a washerwoman; I may as well talk like one.

Martin: You're leading a life as good as I can afford.

Anne: That's just what I'm doing—God help me! (*She gives way to a wild tirade in a shrill, high-pitched voice.*)

Martin (*disregards her*): It serves me right. I was warned against these so-called "love-matches." I should have selected a wife by using my brains, instead of my animal instincts.

The quarrel becomes more violent. *Anne* breaks a little vase which Martin purchased before their marriage and for which he has a tender sentiment, and *Martin* picks up a piece of wax fruit which was Harold's wedding present to *Anne*, and breaks it in retaliation.

Anne (*bursting into a frenzy*): Harold's present! You broke the one thing I have of his. I'd like to take a horse-whip to you.

Everybody's Magazine, July, 1922

Martin (*sneering*): Oh, anything connected with him——

Anne: Yes! Oh, why didn't I marry him? I'd be living in luxury this minute.

Martin (*angrily*): I wish to God you had taken him!

Anne: We agree on that at least.

Martin: We do indeed! I'm in the damndest trap a man was ever caught in, and I guess I'll have to stay in it. You know it. I won't let the world find out I'm dissatisfied, and you know that, too. (*Passionately.*) No one shall ever say, "I told you so," to me.

Anne: Or to me, either. No one shall ever find out. Be easy on that score.

Martin: Why hide your real motive? While we live together, I have to support you.

Anne: I suppose you have some other woman that you'd rather spend your money on.

Martin: If you think so, why don't you get a divorce?

Anne: I wouldn't give you the satisfaction.

Martin (*contemptuously*): Well, that's in keeping with your usual tactics. You've never respected my wishes, and you never will. How could I expect anything else from a wife who wouldn't even have children?

Anne: Do you know why we have no children? (*With feverish intensity.*) Because I won't bear a child to a man I hate!

Martin (*overcome*): My God! Come here! Let me look at you. (*Takes her by the shoulders and regards her steadily.*) How in the world did I ever come to marry you?

Anne (*laughs bitterly*): How, indeed?

Martin: Yes; I know why I did. You attracted me, as one animal attracts another. But the animals are wiser than I am. They don't remain together too long. What do I want with you now? You're not attractive to me any more. Attractive! God, no! I find you repulsive! (*Turns from her.*)

Anne: We have no children, and you find me repulsive. I wouldn't give you a divorce for anything in the world.

Martin: Don't lie. That's not it. You're afraid of what people would say, and so am I. (*He resigns himself to his lot with a deep sigh.*) We have to live together—(*he turns on her with fierce loathing*)—but if you dare to speak to me again, I'll strangle you!

ANNE: I have no wish to speak to you or to have you speak to me. (*She goes into the inner room, closing the door behind her.*)

THE year is 1882, and it is the tenth wedding anniversary of *Martin* and *Anne*. For five years they have not spoken to each other. By this time, however, some of the malice and intensity has gone out of their frightful silence.

Once on this day they make mute recognition of each other. *Martin* goes to the clock, takes out Harold's letter, reads it, and with a sarcastic sneer tosses it on the table before *Anne*. He goes out and *Anne* reads the letter again, then sobs violently.

FIVE years more, and the silence has not yet been broken. It has endured for ten years now, even through a two months' illness, from which *Martin* is slowly recovering.

Anne has come to a decision through these months. She now realizes the stupidity of staying together out of cowardice and spite. So to-day, when the nurse is off duty, she speaks to Martin and tells him that she is going to leave him. Martin, in his weakness, however, cannot tolerate the thought of being left alone.

MARTIN (*completely crushed*): Stay here, Anne!

ANNE (*considering*): Do you remember a certain—promise that we made to each other? We made it because Harold asked us to.

MARTIN: No, I don't.

ANNE: It's enough that *I* remember it. I've thought of nothing but Harold for years. I'm going to keep my promise—on *his* account. Let me keep it—and I'll stay.

MARTIN: What promise?

ANNE: No matter. Listen to me. Love is impossible. We are strangers. But must we always put obstacles in each other's way? Must we be less than strangers?

MARTIN: No. I always said——

ANNE: Sh. Don't be petty now, Martin—I want to—adjust—our marriage. You don't know why, but—I do. Convenience—that's what I want—mutual convenience.

MARTIN (*remonstrating*): But, Anne—such lack of feeling!

ANNE: Martin, let's be strangers—but not enemies. Let's speak when it's necessary, as all strangers do. I won't pry into your affairs; strangers don't do that.

MARTIN: But——

ANNE: Those are my terms, Martin.

MARTIN (*struggles with his pride for a moment, and then completely surrenders*): Well, all right. Let's try it like that.

TEN more years have mellowed both *Martin* and *Anne*, and their silver wedding finds them jogging along comfortably. A certain tenderness for each has come back into their relations.

MARTIN: It's noon. We were married at noon.

ANNE: I was thinking of that, too.

MARTIN: Twenty-five years!

ANNE: Our silver wedding!

MARTIN (*hesitatingly*): Anne; I—I got a little present for you. (*Takes a little package from his pocket.*) I'd like to have you accept it. (*Doubtfully.*) Will you?

ANNE: Why, of course! (*Takes it.*) It was ever so nice of you to do it. (*Opens it and finds a silver mesh bag.*) Oh! Lovely!

MARTIN: I thought you'd like it. I was afraid you might not want to take it.

ANNE: Will you do the same? (*Gives him a silver match-box.*)

MARTIN: Oh, thank you, Anne. It's beautiful!

ANNE: Look here, Martin; I'm a woman, and I understand some things better than you do. Be frank. Why did you get me this? Wasn't it from a little trace of—sentiment?

MARTIN: Yes, Anne. I'm no longer able to be malicious or spiteful—no; I'm not even willing to be. Are you?

ANNE: No. Why do we feel that way now? Is old age coming?

MARTIN: Yes, Anne—old age.

ANNE: Winter is coming, when things die. Everything dies, even regrets. Some regrets are dying now.

MARTIN: Don't you feel yourself saying: "What's the difference? What's the difference?"

ANNE: Do you know what I'd like to do?

MARTIN: What?

ANNE: I'd like to start going to church. How long is it since we went?

MARTIN: A long time. I'd like that, too. You never can tell when— (*With sad remembrance.*) Isn't it too bad Harold died?

Married twenty-five years, 1897. *Martin* and *Anne* have long since realized that there is no spiritual bond between them, yet they settle down to a comfortable middle age.

Photographs by White Studio.

Married fifty years, 1922. ***Martin*** **and** ***Anne*** **in their dotage squabble over a game of cards.**

Anne: Poor old Harold! (*With a sad smile.*) Do you remember the wonderful things he was going to do? (*Comes to him.*) Martin—for his sake—it's the last time we'll ever be reminded of him. Let's keep our word. (*Appealing.*) Martin!

Martin: With all my heart. Oh, Anne, Anne, what a mess we've made of our lives!

Anne: The lonely days are coming, Martin. Are we prepared for them?

Martin: Good God, we'll have to be! We can at least be friends. That is something.

Anne: Something—yes. It means some one to be in the room with.

Martin: Let's be *good* friends.

Anne: How? I want to be, but tell me how?

Martin: I wish I could, offhand. Friendship must be learned, though. I guess we won't find it easy. Only foolish trivial notions of it come to my mind now.

The fiftieth anniversary, 1922. They are crotchety and querulous now. They squabble childishly with each other about petty things, such as whose deal it is at cards and how many points to play for. They began too late to be kind to each other, and now, with the relaxation of their forces which age brings, the old habits of pettiness and quarreling have reasserted themselves. But their memories have failed, and concentration even on their little differences has become almost impossible.

Suddenly Martin remembers what day it is.

Martin: This is our golden wedding. Our anniversary!

Anne (*trying to remember*): Our anniversary? (*She puts down her knitting.*)

Martin: We made a compact, Anne. A fifty-year-old compact.

Anne: To question our hearts. Harold reminded us. Why didn't he write. He always writes.

Martin: Harold is dead, Anne. Dead for years.

Anne: Dead? (*She has a moment of confusion.*) Oh, Harold is dead! Yes.

Martin: This is our anniversary. Ours!

Anne: Our anniversary. That's when we readjust our marriage.

Martin: We try, but we fail. Our marriage has been a failure, Anne.

Anne: It didn't have to be.

Martin: No; it might have been different.

Anne: If there were children——

Martin: We'd have loved them, not each other. Harold loved you. You should have married him. We must adjust our marriage—for the last time. Anne! Anne! Let's succeed this time.

Anne: Why? We haven't many years to live.

Martin: Can't we—at least—forgive each other?

Anne: When life is wasted, what good is forgiveness?

Martin: Oh, Anne, you're right! Forgiveness can do us no good. Nothing can. Married fifty years! Married fifty years! Married— (*He suddenly turns to her with a joyous laugh.*) Married! Anne! Isn't it wonderful? We're actually married! Married! And in our own home!

Anne (*smiling happily*): Our own home.

Martin: We'll show our friends that marriage can be a success—won't we? (*They sit side by side on the sofa. He puts his arm round her.*)

Their vagrant old memories have gone back to the return from their honeymoon, and they get the past and the present pitifully confused. Presently they go back to their card game.

Anne: And I'll keep house and play the piano.

Martin: You ought to practise. There are two pieces you play beautifully.

Anne: And you'll write poems——

Martin: Yes. Perfect match. One long honeymoon. Made in heaven. All that sort of thing. Never even had a quarrel—er—er—what was I going to say? I always forget. (*Angrily.*) Why do you make me forget? You do it purposely! Whose turn is it?

Anne: Mine.

Martin: Then why don't you go ahead?

Anne: I pass.

Martin: I pass.

Next month will be published "The Truth about Blayds," a new play by A. A. Milne, author of "The Red House Murder," "The Dover Road," etc. See August Everybody's—out July 15th.

Inside Stories of Our Secret Service in Russia

Vengeance

Sometimes Espionage Agents Get in Touch with One Another, Each Thinking the Other Is Ignorant of His Identity. Then It Is That One Must Be Quick in the Head and Quick on the Trigger

By Hugh S. Martin

Formerly Captain, Intelligence Service, U. S. A.

ROBERT ELMORE, American Intelligence agent, temporarily attached to the Russian secret service, sat in a stuffy compartment of a second-class sleeping-coach and looked out upon the passing scenes of arctic wilderness. His face bore an expression of mingled satisfaction and wonder.

It was always like this, he thought. One never grasps the full significance of momentous events until they have passed.

Since Elmore had been intimately associated with Zarin, the master operative of the Russian secret service, he had been involved in some of that great detective's most important cases.

It was only a few days ago that the two men had arrived in Murmansk to investigate the disappearance of certain important papers. The methods which Zarin had employed in solving the mystery had seemed so simple at the time and Elmore had been so completely engrossed in his own part in the case that he had not paused to consider the extraordinary situation in which he had become so prominently involved.

A week ago, "Professor" Lomoff had been a highly respected resident of Murmansk—a genial, cultured, hospitable citizen, pursuing the honorable profession of instructor in foreign languages—the last man in the city one would have suspected of being what Zarin and Elmore had proved him to be—a very efficient and a very important agent of the German secret service.

And it was only a week ago that Krikaloff, messenger of the German secret service, had arrived in Murmansk. Those who have read the record of the case will recall how completely he fell into the trap which Zarin had set for him; how, instead of reporting to Lomoff, he had reported to Zarin, believing him to be one of the professor's agents, and how Elmore, bearing an identical copy of the cipher-message which Krikaloff had brought from Petrograd and employing his secret conversational code, had successfully posed as the messenger and recovered the missing papers.

But Zarin had not stopped with the recovery of the papers and the arrest of Lomoff. Exercising that remarkable power of foresight which had characterized him throughout his brilliant career, he had recognized long before the termination of the case that it would leave in his hands certain weapons which could be utilized in the pursuit of bigger game.

The one man in all Russia for whom Zarin had been most energetically directing his search was the chief of the Russian division of the German secret service.

Copyright, 1922, by Hugh S. Martin.

And the one man in all the world whom that elusive individual hated most was Zarin. According to Krikaloff, Zarin's masterful work at Archangel, where he had practically annihilated the entire German secret service division in that district, and at Murmansk had roused the big chief to such fury that he had taken a solemn oath to kill Zarin with his own hands.

And now Zarin was accentuating his contempt for the big chief by sending him an impudent message—by one of his own messengers and in the secret code of one of his own agents.

And Robert Elmore was setting out on the biggest case of his career. He was on the trail of the chief of the German secret service in Russia. As had been arranged beforehand, the messenger—Krikaloff—and Elmore occupied the same compartment in the train.

DURING the seven-day trip to Petrograd, Elmore and Krikaloff formed a close acquaintanceship. Posing as a shipping clerk who had found life in Murmansk unbearable and was returning to Pretrograd in the hope of finding a more exciting environment, Elmore showed himself a fluent conversationalist and an altogether pleasant companion during the long, tiresome journey. Krikaloff, a poor talker at best, soon exhausted his supply of words.

It was not until the day before they were due at Petrograd that he broached the subject which Elmore had long awaited.

"Do you speak any foreign language?" Krikaloff asked.

"Yes," replied Elmore, sensing what was coming; "I speak several—not very well, however."

There was a pause. Krikaloff was carefully feeling his way.

"I always wanted to speak French and English," he continued. "In fact, had I remained in Murmansk, I think I would have taken up the study of both languages. I heard that there was a very good instructor there—a Professor Lomoff."

"Oh, yes," replied Elmore. "I met him several times."

Krikaloff gave a slight start.

"How interesting!" he remarked. "An acquaintance of mine gave me his address, and I had planned to call at his house on Anglieskaya Street and have a talk with him, when I decided to return to Petrograd."

"Professor Lomoff lives on Kanushnaya Street — not Anglieskaya," Elmore corrected—and watched closely for the effect.

"But I am sure my friend told me that he lived on Anglieskaya," returned Krikaloff, with an effort to conceal anxiety.

"It is possible he has moved, but I think not. We always hear of such things in Murmansk, you know."

For a moment Krikaloff remained silent. His face wore an expression of perplexity.

"I wonder if you happen to remember the man who came into the coach with me the day we left Murmansk?" he finally asked.

"The man who stood in the compartment door and talked with you for a while before the train pulled out—that sick-looking person?" Elmore inquired.

"Yes," answered Krikaloff quickly. "Do you know him?"

"Never saw him before," lied Elmore. "But I happen to remember him, because I thought at the time that he looked ill. But why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing in particular," replied Krikaloff. "I haven't known him very long myself, and I was just wondering if you happened to know him. He is a very interesting fellow."

Again Krikaloff lapsed into troubled silence. A few minutes later he rose and passed out of the compartment into the long corridor, which he paced from end to end. He was worried.

Krikaloff was not a man of particularly brilliant attainments, nor was his position one which required any extraordinary mental capacity. He was merely a messenger, or runner, transmitting messages to and from agents of the service in the field and reporting to his chief in Petrograd.

Nevertheless, there were several things which were troubling him. In the first place, he had been told before leaving Petrograd that Professor Lomoff, the Murmansk representative of the German secret service, would very probably send him on a long journey to deliver certain papers of the highest importance. Not only had this not been the case but he had not even laid eyes on the professor. True, he had seen a certain person who must certainly have been the professor's representative—but, somehow, there was something about the thing which he didn't like. Now, the man who shared the compartment with him had stated that Lomoff lived on Kanushnaya Street, whereas he had called at what was apparently the professor's house on Anglieskaya Street. He had seen the professor's code advertisement in the Murmansk paper, and the person representing himself to be the professor's agent had asked the proper code questions. But Krikaloff was worried.

Elmore sat in his compartment and gazed out of the window with satisfaction. He had played his game well. Krikaloff now knew just what Elmore wanted him to know—that he was acquainted with Lomoff and, furthermore, that he had seen the man who stood in the doorway of the compartment just before the train pulled out of Murmansk. Needless to say, that pale-faced individual was Zarin.

Elmore knew that certain surprises were in store for Krikaloff, and he had an idea that when that worried individual reached Petrograd and learned how he had been trapped by Zarin, something would happen. And he was not wrong when he imagined that his advice and assistance would be sought.

On the following day the two reached Petrograd.

"Where will you stop?" asked Krikaloff, as they passed out of the great Nikolaevsky Station.

"Here at the Hotel du Nord," replied Elmore, indicating the great hotel immediately to their right, and he added, "And you are not forgetting that we have agreed to meet some evening at the Empire."

"By no means," said Krikaloff. "When do you expect to be there?"

"The chances are you will find me there any evening during the next few days," replied Elmore.

ON THE Sadovia, just off the Nevsky, was to be found the famous Café Empire.

It was not alone a café. It was an institution—occupying a certain definite, incomparable, undisputed position. It could not boast of the brilliant clientele of the Palace or the Contant; there was not reflected within its mirrored walls the extravagant hilarity of the Bi-Ba-Bo or the Litushie Mwish; neither was it so exclusive as Pekar's nor so blatantly ribald as the Concert. Yet it possessed certain distinctive characteristics peculiarly its own.

There were two *étages*—and even between them there were drawn certain fine lines of distinction. There was a difference in the composition of the orchestras—even in the class of music they played; there was a difference in the bearing of the habitués. The main difference between the up-stairs and the down-stairs groups might be termed one of caste. To borrow a pet phrase from the class-revolutionists, the down-stairs crowd did not possess the "social status" of those who chose to climb the winding stairway to the upper floor.

Most newcomers to the Empire instinctively sought seats in the great room down-stairs. It was twice as large as the up-stairs section, and it was decidedly gayer.

On the second night after his arrival in Petrograd, Robert Elmore was an early arrival at the Empire. Selecting a table down-stairs where he could command a view of the main entrance, he tilted forward the opposite chair and gave the *chelovek* five rubles, so that that important individual might lose nothing in tips by the reservation. Then he ordered tea and tarts and sat back to wait. The trap was set.

There was the usual crowd coming and going in a constant stream—passing up and down the wide aisles, or *promenades*, which separated the long rows of glass-topped tables.

Blear-eyed harlots walked by with youth and beauty; sprightly officers in immaculate uniforms and clanking boots strutted along beside hardened degenerates of the under-world; perfumed women, with shockingly cut gowns and glittering jewels, followed sad-faced shop-girls in frayed coats and cotton stockings.

Seated at the tables were every conceivable species of humanity of every conceivable rank and station. Men, young and old, made violent love to the women and girls who struck their frivolous fancies—for be it known that the unattended woman who crossed the threshold of the Empire at once placed herself within a well-defined category. Thieves sat apart in corners and discussed the progress of their profession. Long-faced radicals wagged their shaggy manes and beat the tables violently with their fists, while their shrieking, high-pitched voices were drowned amid the din of loud conversation, hilarious outbursts of laughter and the blare of tempestuous music.

Elmore did not have long to wait. In a few moments Krikaloff appeared at the main door and began eagerly to scan the bewildering mass of faces. As his eyes met Robert Elmore's, his face, strangely changed, seemed instantly to brighten. Hurrying forward, he grasped the American's outstretched hand.

That Krikaloff was laboring under the stress of some deep and desperate emotion was perfectly obvious. His face was drawn and haggard; his fingers twitched nervously; his staring eyes were sunken and inflamed.

"Well, well," said Elmore, as he greeted the stricken man and offered him the reserved chair, "this is indeed a pleasure."

"And it would be difficult for me to say how glad I am to see you," returned Krikaloff in a hoarse, uneven voice.

"But I say, old man; you look ill."

"Ill! Good God, man, if you only knew how ill I really am!" Krikaloff responded, sinking down into the chair.

Elmore regarded him for a moment with concealed satisfaction.

"But, my dear fellow, you should not have ventured out to-night. Perhaps it would be well for you to see a doctor," he remarked.

"Doctor!" returned Krikaloff, with a hopeless smile. "There is no doctor under heaven who could do me any good, unless"—he quickly sat upright in his chair and leaned forward—"unless it is *you*," he whispered.

"I?" exclaimed Elmore, affecting a look of complete surprise. "If there is anything I can do for you, pray command me."

"If you thought you could save my life, would you make the attempt?" Krikaloff asked in a voice now more steady.

"Most certainly."

"You told me on the train that you remembered the pale-faced man who stood in the compartment door and talked with me for a while before we left Murmansk."

"I do," said Elmore.

"Do you think you would know him if you should see him again?"

"I think I would. I could hardly forget such an extraordinary face."

Krikaloff's drawn face seemed to relax slightly. Leaning far across the table until his face was but a few inches from that of his interested companion, he continued in a cautious undertone:

"Will you come to my room to-morrow afternoon at four o'clock? To be frank with you, it is a matter of life and death with me. Perhaps you can help me; perhaps not. Certainly, if you can't, nobody can. You will have to come alone. I am constantly watched. I was followed here; I shall be followed when I leave. If you will come to-morrow, following the directions I give you, I will explain the desperate situation I am in. I feel I can trust you. Good God, I have got to trust somebody!"

After Elmore had received Krikaloff's directions for reaching him, the wretched German messenger settled back in his chair and, at Elmore's urgent insistence, drank a glass of strong tea.

THE following afternoon Elmore made his way up the Zaharevskaya to a large five-story rooming-house. At the foot of the stairs two sharp-eyed individuals stood conversing in low tones. Barely glancing at them, the American walked past and mounted the stairs. Had he stepped round to the back entrance, he would have found two more waiting there. Krikaloff was right when he said that his movements were watched.

Up four flights of stairs, and making sure that no one had followed him, Elmore knocked softly on the door of room fifty-six, and it was opened by Krikaloff. Motioning his guest to enter, he quickly closed and bolted the door.

"Sit down," he said in a low voice, indicating a chair. There was a ghastly expression on his face.

Throwing his hat and coat upon the small bed, Elmore seated himself. Krikaloff pulled up a second chair and sat down within two feet of his guest.

"Thank God you have come!" he began in a husky, hopeless voice. "I cannot stand this thing much longer."

"My dear fellow," Elmore replied, "compose yourself and tell me just what your trouble is."

There was a note of consolation in Elmore's voice. Krikaloff seemed to be making a desperate effort to control himself.

"Do I look like a man under sentence of death?" he finally managed to say.

"Well, I must say that you seem to be in some very desperate situation," Elmore replied. "But go on."

"To begin with," Krikaloff resumed, "I occupy a position,the nature of which, for obvious reasons, cannot be disclosed." He had dropped his voice to almost a whisper. "Recently," he continued, "in the course of my work, I was led into a trap. The man who led me into that trap happens to be the deadly enemy of my chief. You may guess that I am engaged in rather perilous work when I tell you that my life depends upon my finding the man who trapped me."

"Saints preserve us!" exclaimed Elmore, cautiously guarding his voice. "You *are* in a devil of a situation! Without seeking to have you divulge any secrets, I would say offhand that you are an agent of the government and that the man you seek is an agent of the enemy."

For a few seconds Krikaloff said nothing. Why should he not appear to be what his visitor apparently thought him? A capital idea! He would adopt it.

"Perhaps you have guessed it," he finally answered, with something of a knowing glance. The conversation was bracing him up. He felt stronger.

"And if I may presume to guess still further," Elmore went on, "the man you are looking for is the man you have asked me about—the pale-faced individual who came to the train with you at Murmansk."

Krikaloff's face was beginning to light up.

"Exactly," he replied. "You would make a good agent yourself. You have guessed rightly." He smiled significantly.

"As I see it," Elmore continued, "you have invited me here to ask me to help you find this man, because you know that I remember having seen him there in Murmansk."

"Precisely," answered Krikaloff. "The truth is, I have strong reason to believe that the man I seek is now, or soon will be, in Petrograd. This happens to be his headquarters. But he knows me—and he has the eyes of a hawk. He is not human. Your great advantage lies in the fact that, while you know him, he does not know you."

How Zarin, thought Elmore, would enjoy all this! Here he was, one of Zarin's most intimate friends, posing as an utter stranger and plotting with a German agent to deliver him into the hands of the chief of the German secret service. And there was Krikaloff, messenger of that secret service, whose life depended upon the capture of his chief's deadliest enemy! And here he was himself, buying Krikaloff's confidence with a promise to help him! And Krikaloff, acting upon Elmore's cleverly directed suggestion, posing as a Russian secret agent! Base indeed are the laws of espionage. But Elmore was not so base as he might seem. He had promised to assist Krikaloff in the preservation of his life. And that was just exactly what he intended to do.

"How long have you been given in which to find this pale-faced individual?" he asked.

"Just one week," said Krikaloff. "If I am unable to locate him within seven days, I shall forfeit my own life. And before I will submit to such a death, I will kill myself. Now you see why I have gone to the desperate length of telling you my story. I would quit this damnable business tomorrow, were it not for my chief's terrible power. For me there is no escape. Were I to attempt to flee, he would have me trailed to the ends of the earth. O God, how I long to be free—free of this feeling that I am constantly at the verge of death!"

THERE were tears in his eyes; there was a note of deep pathos in the words he had uttered. And from that very pathos Elmore got an idea. Here was a man who was serving the German system and who would like to be free of its all-powerful grip. Good! Elmore would help him. But in doing so, he would deal one more staggering blow to the Intelligence Section of the great German general staff.

"Krikaloff," he said, "you are right in thinking that I can help you—and you are right in believing that I will do so. I shall. I wanted to hear your story and understand fully and exactly the nature of your trouble. Now that I know, I shall tell you something which will interest you. I knew from what you said last night that you were involved in some desperate situation. Your face and your manner disclosed that very clearly. And I knew that in some way the pale-faced man figured in your troubles, though, of course, I could not know to what extent. It was the second time you had asked me about him, and you seemed particularly anxious to know if I would recognize him if I should see him again. Now prepare yourself for a shock."

Krikaloff sat upright, and looked at his visitor in tense expectancy.

"This morning," Elmore went on, "I went to the Nikolaevsky Station to inquire after my baggage, which was not yet come down from Murmansk. I was referred to the Murman Railway section of the baggage department. As I stood there, waiting my turn, I saw the very man you are seeking."

"*Radi Boga!*" cried Krikaloff, jumping from his chair and grasping Elmore's shoulder. "You saw him there—to-day?"

To say that Robert Elmore was an ingenious liar would be expressing it but crudely.

"I am certain that I saw him," Elmore continued. "And, furthermore, I think I shall see him again to-morrow."

Krikaloff was beside himself with excitement.

"Good God!" he fairly shouted, disregarding the danger of loud conversation and grasping Elmore's arms with his hands. "Go on, man—why do you think you will see him? Tell me!"

"Sit down and compose yourself and I will," Elmore replied. When Krikaloff had reluctantly obeyed, he continued: "Knowing that you had some deep interest in the man, I moved up close to him so that I could hear what he had to say. When his time came to speak with the baggage-agent, he asked about a trunk he was expecting from Murmansk. The agent took his check, and after several moments' search returned and reported that the trunk had not arrived and that it might come in on the night train. The pale-faced person took back the check and said that he would return to-morrow.

"Now, if you will leave this thing to me, I will go to the station and watch for him. It will be better for me to go alone, because if he should see you, he would become suspicious. Once I see him again, you may rest assured I will follow him and see where he goes. Then you can have something to report to your chief."

Krikaloff arose from his chair and stood there like one transfixed. Even in his wildest, most far-fetched hopes he had not dreamed of any such luck as this. Stepping forward, he grasped Elmore's hand.

"My friend," he said, "if you do that, I will owe my life to you—and if there is anything in this world I can do to repay you, I promise you that you have only to ask it."

To this Elmore made no reply. If he succeeded in saving Krikaloff's life, he would expect certain information in return.

"Now, in case I find where this man lives," he continued, "have you any means of informing your chief quickly?"

"I have," was the reply.

Elmore then left the house and made his way back to the Hotel du Nord. Although he had a little apartment on the French Quay, he was finding it advisable for the present to stop at the hotel.

That night he called upon Zarin at the latter's apartment, and together they formulated elaborate plans of action—which, alas, were to be wrecked by circumstances which they had not anticipated.

TWO days later, Zarin was stricken down with influenza and lay ill in his apartment. And now the storm of revolution began to show unmistakable signs of breaking. Agents of destruction were assembling their hordes for battle. At his hotel, late in the afternoon, Elmore received a telephone-call from Zarin's old housekeeper asking that he come immediately to his friend.

As he left the hotel it was perfectly evident that the long-deferred conflict was imminent. Enormous crowds were gathering in the plaza before the Nikolaevsky Station—frenzied mobs of madmen. From the direction of the Tauride Palace intermittent rifle-fire could be heard. There was a tenseness in the atmosphere—a depressing tenseness. Something was about to happen—something the extent of which no man could foretell. Thinking men stood by in grave silence as the yielding will of the rabble was being swayed to higher and higher pitches by street-corner orators. Designing agitators, bloodthirsty villains, thieves anticipating the possibilities of loot, wild-eyed revolutionists—all looked on with gleeful satisfaction as the ranks of the proletarian crusaders steadily increased.

Laboriously making his way through the surging multitude, Elmore finally reached a point where he could turn into a side street, then hurried on to Zarin's apartment. There he found his friend confined to his bed with a burning fever.

"Well, what's this, old man?" he said, taking Zarin's outstretched hand.

"Only a slight touch of grip," said Zarin.

"No doubt I will be out in a day or so, but for the moment I must remain indoors. That is why I have sent for you. There is hell to pay—and there is much to be done."

"What—you mean this brewing revolution?"

"The revolution is on, my dear friend. God alone knows whither it will lead. Perhaps you know that the jails were thrown open by the mobs last night and all the criminals in the district turned loose?"

"No, I didn't," said Elmore. "But after looking over the mobs I just saw in the streets, I can't say that I am surprised."

"Remember our old friend, Antonov?" Zarin went on.

"Antonov, the murderer—the abductor?"

"Exactly," Zarin replied. "The sailor who killed General Yaroslavsky and almost succeeded in stealing his daughter, Anna Petrovna. I received a message from headquarters late this afternoon that he had been set free."

ZARIN spoke gravely. Anna Petrovna Yaroslavsky was one of the few women he had ever known in a social way. He had known many of them professionally. But Anna Petrovna was different. She was his friend, as her father had been his friend. And, so far as Zarin was concerned, Anna Petrovna would always be his friend and only his friend.

When General Yaroslavsky had been murdered and Anna Petrovna seized by the murderer, it was only natural that Zarin should drop his work at headquarters.

And it was likewise only natural that, once having taken up the chase, he completely foiled the designs of Antonov and lodged that unconscionable fiend behind the bars to await the action of the criminal courts. Needless to say, the disorganized courts of Russia since the March Revolution had been moving slowly, and now Antonov, after having languished in prison for many weeks, was free to resume his dastardly operations—free at a time when there was no law, no power to check the fiendish desires of his cunning brain.

"I imagine," Zarin continued, "that Antonov would give a good deal to lay hands upon me. Unfortunately, he learned of my identity at the preliminary hearing. Perhaps I was unduly careless because I felt so absolutely certain that he would never live to be free again. However, that is another matter. It is not of myself that I am thinking now. It is of poor little Anna Petrovna."

Zarin paused for a moment and reached for a glass of water with which he moistened his parched lips.

"As soon as I was notified that he was free," he continued, "I telephoned to Anna's apartment, but got no response. Perhaps she is out of the city. I believe she frequently visits relatives at Tsarskoë-Selo. I hope to God she is there now. But Elmore, it is for you to make sure that that innocent girl does not fall into Antonov's hands. Save her at any cost from that beast. I haven't the slightest idea where you should turn to look for him. You saw him at the hearing, and you could never forget his face. I will give you the address of Anna Petrovna's relatives. Perhaps you can get into touch with them."

For a moment Elmore sat still. There was an expression of deepest anxiety upon his face.

"Zarin," he finally said, "I shall do what you ask; but let me say that Antonov is the sort of person who would stop at nothing to satisfy his hatred. There are at least two men in this city to-night who would kill you on sight. It is possible that they are both searching for you at this very moment. One is Antonov and the other is the chief of the German secret service. The latter does not know you. The former does — —"

"Fortunately he does not know where I live," Zarin interrupted.

"Trust the ingenuity of Antonov to find that out," Elmore returned. "But what's that?"

From the distance came the thunder of heavy artillery—the screaming and bursting of shells—the wild shouts of the mobs in the streets—the rattle of rifles and machine guns.

"The guns of Saints Peter and Paul," said Zarin. "Look, Elmore, and see where their shells are falling."

Elmore rushed to a front window.

"The guns of the Fortress of Peter and Paul—turned on the Winter Palace," was his answer.

Zarin made no comment. None was necessary. The impregnable fortress was in the enemy's hands. With its guns they could destroy the whole of Petrograd. The

Winter Palace—Kerensky's last stronghold—was under fire.

The two men looked squarely at each other. The storm was upon them—and they knew that, with each thundering report of the distant guns, civilization trembled upon its foundations.

From the hallway came the violent ringing of the telephone-bell. Elmore answered it. There was a woman's voice at the other end.

"Hello!" she cried wildly. "Mr. Zarin, my friend, for the love of God, save me!"

"Who are you and where are you?" Elmore called back.

"Anna Petrovna," she answered. "O merciful heavens, he has me! Come, or it will be too late."

"Where are you?" Elmore almost shouted.

Suddenly she lowered her voice and barely whispered to him. In another instant there came over the wires a piercing scream, followed by a loud crash. The telephone had been dashed to the floor, but the transmitter continued to function. Elmore heard the low, gruff voice of Antonov.

"So," he said, "you have called to him for help, have you? Well, you have done just what I thought you would do when I left you in this room. But, my beautiful wench, in doing so you have sealed his doom. While you were calling from here, I had the call traced from below. You see, our switchboard operators have joined the forces of the proletariat. Now I know where the dog Zarin lives. He shall die. Ha, you impudent hussy—now see what you have done! Zarin shall die! Ha! You cringe, do you? And well you may, you damned *bourgeoise*. You have lived long enough in luxury. Now you shall pay! Cringe, wench! That's right; cross yourself and pray to your holy God in heaven to help you!"

Without waiting to hear more, Elmore hurriedly put up the receiver and walked back into Zarin's bedroom.

"What was it?" Zarin inquired.

"A matter which you are not to worry about," Elmore replied, adding, "Have you a revolver with you?" He spoke with that calmness which fortifies a man in a moment of grave peril.

"Yes," answered Zarin, reaching under his pillow and taking out a large army automatic. "Do you want it?"

"No," replied Elmore, taking up his hat and coat, which he had thrown upon a chair as he entered. "I only wanted to make sure that you had one. Keep it in your hand—and take care of yourself, old man." Taking out his watch, he continued: "I have an appointment with Krikaloff in fifteen minutes. I expect to find the big chief there."

"And what do you intend to do—now that this infernal revolution has broken in upon our plans?" asked Zarin.

"Damned if I know!" replied Elmore, throwing on his coat. "Keep that gun in your hand. With Antonov and the big chief both hell-bent on killing you, it is possible that you may have use for it."

ELMORE was no mean sprinter—and, fortunately, fast running at that moment did not attract any particular attention. Dashing through the turbulent streets, he made his way to the broad Liteiny Prospect, hardly heeding the wild scenes of disorder. A flood of thoughts was crowding his mind. Where did his immediate duty lie?

First of all, he was an American on military duty. His country was at war. The enemies of Russia were the enemies of America. One of the most insidious of those enemies was the chief of the German secret service in Russia. It was he who was conspiring with the agents of Bolshevism to wreck Russia, so that Germany might combine her forces and throw them against the Allied lines in the West.

And at that very moment Elmore had reason to believe that the German secret-service chief was awaiting him at Krikaloff's room. Yesterday he had promised to meet Krikaloff and lead him to Zarin's apartment. Krikaloff, in turn, had communicated this important information to the big chief, who had promised to meet Elmore and Krikaloff at the appointed time.

But there was Anna Petrovna Yaroslavsky—Zarin's friend—an innocent girl at the mercy of the fiendish brute! Perhaps it was within the power of Elmore to save her. Should he try? Should he ignore his appointment at Krikaloff's and thereby sacrifice his one great chance to put an end to the operations of the German chief? Should the honor of a woman divert him from his duty to his country?

In the wild screams of the terrified women in the streets he seemed to hear the words of Anna Petrovna—the frantic cry for help—the wail of a woman pleading for her soul. "For the love of God, save me!" she had said. "Come, or it will be too late."

"For the love of God!" murmured Elmore. He had reached the Zaharevskaya. For an instant he stopped, then turned and ran on toward the house in which Krikaloff and the big chief awaited him.

"This is war," he said to himself.

Three minutes later he stood before Krikaloff's door. He was five minutes late. From inside the room he caught the sound of a deep, gruff voice, raised in anger.

"If he does not come within five minutes, you will pay with your life!" Krikaloff's visitor was shouting. "Fool! Miserable, stupid dog! You permitted Zarin to lead you into a trap, did you? And you helped him to make a fool of me, did you? Ha! To think that I have suffered humiliation at the hands of that impudent swine! Before I leave this room, I'm going to kill you—and then I am going to kill Zarin! Ha! I'll find him."

Hastily examining his revolver and replacing it in his outer coat pocket, Elmore rapped on the door. The gruff voice within became silent. In an instant the door was opened by the terrified Krikaloff.

"Thank heaven!" he whispered, with a deep sigh of relief, as Elmore entered.

Standing in the center of the room was a large, powerfully built, brutelike individual, whose face was covered by an enormous black beard, obviously false. A large fur collar was turned up over his neck and ears.

"This is the man," Krikaloff announced in a trembling voice.

"Then come!" said the big chief, reaching into his pocket and taking out a spirit-flask, from which he drank deeply. "Now," he said, "lead on! Lead me to Zarin!"

Without a word, Elmore led the way from the house and turned down the Zaharevskaya, closely followed by Krikaloff and his gruff companion. Crossing the Liteiny, with its shouting mobs, and selecting streets less likely to be filled with impassable crowds, they pressed on.

Here and there men, women and children lay dead, dying or wounded. There was terror in the air. Human beings had suddenly become beasts. The ruthless hand of Bolshevism was raised above the maddened city.

Giving little attention to what was being enacted about them, the three men went on. From behind them came a volley of rifle-shots. Bullets whizzed over their heads. Violent, piercing screams and sickening moans rent the air.

"Ha!" cried the big bearded man. "Shoot on—kill—murder! Ah—what a time for revenge! What a night! Wait until I see him. Zarin shall die! I shall kill him! I have waited long. Now I shall show him who is master."

The man was mad—crazed by a fever of hate—raving with a mania to kill.

Finally they reached the entrance to a large apartment-house. Elmore turned.

"Here," he said.

WITHOUT a word, the three men entered the courtyard. The place was quiet. The looters apparently had not yet arrived.

At the entrance door each man took out his revolver and examined it. Their faces were rigid.

Mounting the stairs, Elmore led the way to the third floor. Stepping forward, he inspected the name-plate on a certain door and nodded to his companions.

The big man advanced like a giant bear hungry for blood. Drawing his huge revolver and rapping violently upon the door, he turned upon his companions with a menacing gesture.

"Stand back!" he shouted. This was to be *his* revenge. Respectfully, Elmore and Krikaloff, with drawn revolvers, stepped back.

There was a sound within and, a moment later, the door was opened slightly upon its safety-chain, disclosing the white, terrified face of a woman servant. In an instant the big man had leveled his revolver against her cheek.

"Open!" he demanded—and his voice was like the growl of a maddened beast.

The door swung open. The giant stepped forward.

"Where is he?" he demanded of the trembling servant, pressing the steel barrel of the revolver against her chalklike face. The woman pointed toward a door at the end of the corridor. Together they advanced.

Whispering to Krikaloff to remain on guard at the door, Elmore followed.

Obeying a commanding gesture from the

German, the woman opened the door to which she had pointed.

"What is the meaning of this?" a man's voice shouted from within. The intruder rushed into the room with leveled revolver. With a bound, Elmore sprang forward. There was an agonizing scream from the woman—followed by two shots.

Krikaloff, peering through the long corridor into the dimly lighted room in the distance, saw the figure of a man pitch forward and fall face downward to the floor. In another instant the giant form of the German appeared in the doorway. Throwing his smoking revolver from him, he grasped his breast with both hands and staggered back to the entrance door, where Krikaloff waited. Sinking down upon his knees, he tore open his heavy coat. There was blood upon his throat. His bulging eyes stared wildly at the terrified Krikaloff.

"He is dead!" he cried in a broken, faltering voice. "I—have killed him." He spoke slowly, painfully. "But the dog—the cur—has killed me. Ah—the dog—I die knowing that I have killed him! Ha—see— I have killed him." He made an effort to point toward the room at the end of the corridor. "Zarin—I have killed him—killed the dog—Zarin——"

With a quick, tense movement, he partially raised himself—then fell back with a horrible choking sound—dead.

A moment later Elmore emerged from the room at the end of the corridor, followed by two women with heavy woolen scarfs pulled about their heads. One was the servant; the other was a girl. A faint tinge was beginning to color her pale cheeks. There was a look of inexpressible relief upon her delicately beautiful face.

"Mr. Elmore," she was saying in a low, melodious voice, "you have saved me. Oh—how can I ever begin to thank you?"

They reached the door, where Krikaloff stood mutely gazing at the body of his late chief. Seeing Elmore, he stepped forward and grasped his hand.

"Thank God!" he said. "Thank God, I am free! For the first time in seven years I am free. Now I can quit this damnable game. You have kept your promise. You have saved my life. Henceforth I am at your service——"

"Come!" Elmore interrupted. "We must go—quickly. We must go to Zarin."

"Zarin!" cried the dumfounded Krikaloff. "Zarin! Merciful God—I thought Zarin was dead—killed. Tell me, man, in the name of God, what does this mean? Surely—we saw—the big chief killed him."

Elmore smiled.

"The big chief only *thought* he was killing Zarin," he replied. "As a matter of fact, he killed Antonov—the one man besides himself who had sworn to kill Zarin. Now they are both dead. Instead of killing Zarin, they have killed each other."

AN HOUR later, Elmore sat in Zarin's bedroom.

"I hardly know just how to explain it," he said, somewhat embarrassed. "When the telephone-bell rang to-night and I learned from Miss Yaroslavsky that she was at Antonov's mercy—and when I heard him tell her how he had tricked her into calling you and how he had traced the call so that he might find you, naturally my first thought was to go to her rescue. She had whispered to me over the 'phone that she was in her own apartment—and, fortunately, I knew where that was. Luckily, Krikaloff's place lies between here and Miss Yaroslavsky's. So I decided to stop on the way and attempt to put up some excuse which would hold Krikaloff and the big chief until I could return. Then another thought occurred to me. Why not take the big chief and Krikaloff with me? In that way I would not run the risk of losing them. And, furthermore, with such formidable reenforcements, I could be more certain of success in my attempt to rescue Miss Yaroslavsky. But how could I prevail upon them to accompany me? Easy enough. By simply permitting them to believe that I was leading them to Zarin.

"Acting upon that impulse, I led them on. As it turned out, the big chief insisted upon doing the shooting—and, as for Antonov, he also got in a very effective shot. That's all—except that I brought Miss Yaroslavsky and her maid here for safekeeping until we can arrange to send them out of Russia. And Krikaloff is here, with some rather interesting information which he is anxious to give you."

The next adventure of Elmore will be related in "The Pearls of Novgorod," to appear in August Everybody's—out July 15th.

The Great Human Story of a Woman

A FLASH OF GOLD

Nancy Decides upon Marriage with David. But Forrester Stone Enters; the Imps of Conquest Reappear, and She Is Left More Perplexed Than Ever

By Francis R. Bellamy

Illustrations by C. H. Taffs

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

THERE wasn't much to the engagement of Dr. David Carpenter and Miss Nancy Van Wyck—not so much as the betrothal of the daughter of one of the richest men in Clewesbury, self-made though he was, to the scion of a pioneer family might have been expected to produce. But just what could Congress Avenue do about an engagement that wasn't really announced—or recognized, either?

There was one rather dreadful dinner at David's old home in Fitzhugh Street, with Aunt Hat eating stolidly and saying never a word, and seeming to see through spectacles made of the sewer-pipe through which gold had flowed into Andrew Van Wyck's coffers—those sewer-pipes which leaped to her mind and her tongue's end whenever Nancy's name came up. Breck Addams gave them a party; so did Kitty Sassoon. Those were fun. But Andrew Van Wyck stuck to his guns; he wouldn't do a thing in the way of recognizing his daughter's engagement. He didn't approve. If she chose to marry Carpenter in spite of him—well, she could.

It wasn't at all, of course, the conventional attitude of the stern and disapproving parent that Van Wyck adopted. It never had been. Congress Avenue couldn't fathom his motives.

They tortured him—those motives of his. Those—and his memories; and his memories, indeed, accounted for all—memories of Nancy's mother, beautiful, like a flashing thing of beauty in the grim, drab texture of his life; her flight, leaving illusions, hopes, shattered. And then—the slow emergence in Nancy of every quality her mother had possessed—charm, selfishness, thoughtlessness, surrender to each passing whim, each leaping phantom of desire.

Carpenter! If Van Wyck had been able to believe that he could hold her! But a dreamer—a chap who'd given up the makings of a successful fashionable practise to go down to the Brotherhood House on Kerrigan Street and minister to the slobs down there, the Italians and the Polacks. Oh, Van Wyck helped to support the Brotherhood House through the Federated Charities! Forrester Stone represented him in such things—Stone, who understood so well, in his sublimated publicity work for great financial interests, the commercial value of charity!

Stone! He was one of the reasons for Van Wyck's doubts. The girl had played with Carpenter for months. Then she had

Copyright, 1922, by Francis R. Bellamy.

dropped him. She had begun to play her tricks with Stone. And then, in the twinkling of an eye, she had called Carpenter back—said she meant to marry him. Wanton! He knew it. He dreaded having to see her follow the path to ruin and disgrace her mother had trodden.

Who should understand Andrew Van Wyck? Nancy came nearest, perhaps. And she had tried to solve her problem in her own way. She was sure of love—while it was love. Marriage was what she had feared, even with David. Then—why marry? And he had cast her off. And still she had loved him enough to seek him out and draw him back. So they were engaged, but about their engagement there was none of the glamour other girls had had.

No one, perhaps, was more relieved than David.

There was only one evening out of the hundred, too, when anything serious held Nancy's mind. She probed David's mind curiously that night.

"I can understand helping," she said then, "because it isn't pleasant to be poor. But there isn't any thrill in it for me—not like being a star on Broadway or building the steel trust or—or anything like that."

"No," David replied; "it isn't showy."

"And it doesn't get you any place," she urged. "They really only want to get rich on Kerrigan Street. They don't really appreciate anything." Dim memory told her that, indeed—childish remembrance of Baden Street and women in the kitchen, talking of Holland and horses and drink, along with the price of coal by the bag and the wages at the potteries. "I should think a man would be wasted in the settlement."

"Well, not really wasted," David told her. An odd flash came in his eyes, too, with the picture of raw existence the subject conjured up. She evidently did not know what went on in some of those places to which he was called.

He stood up by the mantel.

"I think I can dig out a real usefulness for myself on Kerrigan Street. There's something back of a settlement house; it's got in it the germ of the thing I want to do."

There was in his eyes, too, an odd look—a queer fire that struck Nancy at once. It struck her with indescribable force.

"Then it's what you ought to do, Dave, I guess," she said, curiously arrested.

It was the only moment of curiosity that she had before the afternoon when she came down the broad stairs of the Morpeth Terrace house, dressed in her light-gray traveling dress, and sought David's arms rather tremulously where he stood in the library. They would be alone in a few hours—and she would be his. That was what these wedding presents, the silent house, the waiting motor outside said to her as she fixed her veil for the last time in the hall. She was leaving Morpeth Terrace forever—despite her father's objections.

Her father was at St. Peter's to give her away, she noticed breathlessly, as they came down the aisle, and Miss Harriet Carpenter had apparently come, while Aunt Minnie was weeping, curiously enough, in the last pew on the end.

"Good-by, Nan," was all her father said in the end, with a curiously fixed look in his eyes. "Remember—I'm your father."

He was still standing on the steps outside, too, she always remembered, waiting for William and his motor, his eyes still fixed on their disappearing car down Congress Avenue as they turned the corner and went down Andrews Street toward the station.

THEY came home in the rain. Rain! It gave an odd feeling of guiltiness to David, somehow, as they turned into Kerrigan Street with its pools and rivers of wet—an odd sensation of truancy. No; he had not given this street of despondency and hard gaiety a thought since he and Nancy had left. He looked at the dark, watery expanse of playground, the white pillars of the Brotherhood House, gleaming with rain, aware indeed of a stronger feeling than mere truancy. It was good to be back, to do something again. He and Nancy would make up for the moments of magic they had stolen from the program of endeavor.

"It's great to be back, Nan!" he said.

"Yes," she allowed, a little dubiously. It was great to be back, of course. But—but, somehow, wasn't this place a little of an anticlimax after the romance and excitement of the past evenings of music and plays and bright lights?

"Yes—but, I suppose"—David teased her—"but it isn't the Blackstone. Or a honeymoon."

"I liked the honeymoon," she admitted whimsically.

"So did I." He gave her a glance of tenderness. "We'll have the continuation here," he said, smiling, "though in a little different way. What do you say?"

"I don't want any change," she said perversely.

"We'll keep it the same, then," he agreed, "and just add a little work on Kerrigan Street—that's all. That would leave it the same."

But it was not going to be the same, Nancy decided, as she watched David from the window, picking his way across the yard to the brick building, and then turned back into the room. It was going to be different—quite different. She would not be able to have all his time now. She would have her own existence to consider again. It had been wonderful to lose her own identity in David's these past weeks. That, and the strange sensation, paradoxically enough, of being absolutely her own mistress had been the overtopping emotions of those wonderful days. She had not been conscious of any attraction, any desire for any one in the world except David.

But love could not be everything now, of course. She would have this apartment and meals and marriage to consider.

It was a curiously different life to which she was returning, too, compared with the one she had left, even though it contained almost the same people and was bounded by the same limits of Clewesbury and its streets and theatres and drives. Their small apartment now, instead of the blue-and-gold room overlooking the garden on Morpeth Terrace. The tiny kitchen, where she would get their breakfasts while David shaved, instead of the big blue-hung dining-room where she could come down in negligee and gaze pleasantly out over the pergola while Maggie brought in the coffee and rolls. How was she really going to like Kerrigan Street?

BEFORE the first week was over, however, she confessed to a whimsical liking for it. The apartment was her own, somehow, and she could do what she liked with it.

And the whole place, Kerrigan Street and all, was so different—so almost foreign, like some distant land. It was like starting on a tiny adventure every morning to go out shopping, looking at vegetables on the funny carts, tickling the cats at the butcher's and grocer's, where every one seemed to smile a welcome at her when she came in. Much more fun than sitting in the big library on Morpeth Terrace, with everything on the street obscured by the high shrubbery.

And when she was tired at night, she and David could seek out so many queer little restaurants that she was sure Kitty Sassoon never knew existed. There was an air of bohemian romance over the whole place—you could never tell what any one was going to say. Kerrigan Street was like living in a mystery.

"Why, I just love it down here!" she told David rapturously, after the first few weeks.

"Well, I'm glad of that." He smiled. "We'll try it a little longer, then?"

"At least a month!" she said gaily. It was one of their jokes, to pretend that either one of them might decide any day that the marriage was over—that the whole thing was only an experiment.

The whole thing was a sort of adventure, she had decided, by the time winter had come in good earnest and dirty gray snow filled the sides of the street, marked here and there by frozen-in ash-barrels. Why had she ever been afraid of marriage?

Then came pleasant parties of youthful married life—little dinner-parties, followed by bridge or the movies down at the Rialto, or sometimes just by engaging talk round the wood fire in the apartment. Aunt Hat and Susan came, and made her nervous over the way she had the dinner served—little Maria was willing, but not trained—and talked before the fire and went home, Hat staring with silent disapproval at the tiny kitchenette. Breck and Kitty came, and Janet and Kenny Watson, and even Mr. and Mrs. Edmunds, just as a lark. Yes; Mr. Edmunds had known David's grandfather, he told them, when Congress Avenue was crowded with racing cutters every Saturday afternoon.

Nancy joined the Babies' Aid Society, too, and spent long, pleasant afternoons sewing and talking at the different houses of the youthful members while they had tea and otherwise imitated their amused elders in dispensing fashionable charity. And David went deeper and deeper into the neighborhood that little Miss Haynes served, while he gradually turned over his work at the Acme Tire Company and the Champlain works to the younger doctors who were struggling to get started down on Madison Street.

There was even a curious kind of thrill in listening to the queer people David brought home with him. Not even Breck had the strange, colorful flow of language that Anton Fechter had, for instance, when he began talking about the whitewashed village in the Carpathians from which he had come as a child—or when he described his years in the mills in Moscow, his work in the sweat-shops of lower New York, or the afternoon when he came home and found David bending over his only child on the bed. His voice always trembled when he told her that. It was a real friend, he assured her, who had taken his boy from the car-tracks and called the ambulance and brought him home with those splints in his poor little leg, no thicker, by God, no thicker than a stick! A much bigger man than people imagined—the doctor! That was what Anton Fechter said.

She watched David with curious eyes after that as he went deeper and deeper into his work and the stream of Clewesbury's childhood flowed through his office. He had never told her anything about that affair. He had always evinced an odd desire not to discuss his work. Were there other sides to him that she did not know about?

She devoted herself to discovering that, as the winter spent itself, drawing out little Anzia Lublin in David's study, as the Polish girl typed his letters, her worn shawl drawn so tightly about her neck, questioning Vera Vassilof artlessly as that lady went out mornings with a cheerful smile on her freckled, pleasant face and a sheaf of report-cards in her pocket, even becoming confidential with little gray-haired Miss Haynes with the look of inexplicable happiness in her eyes.

She derived a peculiar pride in her husband from those adventures in curiosity—and a strange confusion, too. Yes; Dave was the salt of the earth, and it was fine of him to work on Kerrigan Street; but she mustn't let him become a nut, like the rest of these social-service workers. Good-by Palm Beach and Bar Harbor if she did! That was the advice of the Babies' Aid members, so far as she could discern it. A fine man, the doctor, so Miller, the grocer, assured her—if he only would go a step further and become a socialist, instead of agreeing so heartily with their indictment and sweeping aside so completely their remedy. Endowed with a peculiar desire to seek the truth, so Miss Haynes told her in confidence, and only liable to go too far in seeking it. And easily taken in, and apt to believe in people too readily, satirical Miss Vassilof told her, as she fingered the cards of her "cases." But an excellent doctor, a real child-specialist, if Kerrigan Street only knew it, so Dr. Dunstan informed her. And the only real American she had ever known who didn't consider himself superior, so Anzia Lublin let slip in the pauses of typewriting. Though he surely didn't consider Kerrigan Street the place to bring up any children of his own, did he?

It was Anzia's last question which induced the most confusion in Nancy. A kind of tacit agreement among her and her youthful friends that children weren't to be mentioned—not in a personal sense, that is. There would be time for children after one had been married a while, when one was the age of the older married set, who were all beginning to have babies now that they had their houses and felt completely settled. And this Anzia Lublin appeared to think that children were taken for granted right away!

It must be sarcasm, though, of course, when she said that Kerrigan Street was a fit place to bring them up. She and David had a sort of mutual understanding that there would be no children until they both wanted them—until they were in a position to have them. And she had taken that to mean that of course he would never consider bringing up any youngsters in a place like Kerrigan Street.

"You know, we would have to move away," she told David that night at dinner.

"That seems to be just the difficulty," he agreed with her. "Slums are only for other people's children."

THAT was the reason for Brotherhood House, she figured out finally—and her opinion of David's work rose appreciably. How odd it was that such things didn't seem to mean much during engagement! And yet how plain they were, when one came in contact with them! Miss

David never forgot that evening when he listened to Fechter teaching the principles of production and distribution, and he caught a glimpse of the industrial struggle at work.

Haynes and Mrs. Edmunds and all the women and men who had carried on and contributed to this Brotherhood House must have seen all this years ago. Did the Babies' Aid Society really realize it?

"You'd have a very dull and uncomfortable life without me, though, wouldn't you?" she demanded of him. "No excitements, or funny evenings, or—or anything except poverty. Wouldn't you?"

"I wouldn't consider existence without you," he told her, with satisfactory accompaniments.

That was their understanding through all the evenings of the winter, as Nancy's adventures in curiosity finally reduced themselves to plain demands upon David for all known facts.

"But how did you get the confidence of the people down here so they would come to you?" she insisted finally, after he had told her that he had done only the ordinary things.

"They were already in the habit of coming here," he pointed out.

"I know," she remonstrated. "But that doesn't tell me anything. What did you do when you came down here; what gave them the idea you could cut people up or cure the—or be any, any good?"

He laughed a little at that.

"Because they didn't die, I suppose."

"But didn't anything exciting happen to you?" she insisted.

"Something dramatic, you mean," he remarked meanly.

"Yes."

He searched his mind slowly while he drew on his pipe.

"Well, Zalinsky's wife was dramatic, I suppose," he said finally.

"Oh, what was that?"

"Appendicitis," he explained.

"But Davie, Davie—" She pummeled him angrily. "You tell me, and stop all this waiting!"

"Well, she had it, and I knew it—and I doubted if she'd last till I could get her to the hospital. And Zalinsky came in just as I got her—we had the General ambulance—to the door. He was drunk, and——"

"Yes?"

"Well, he wouldn't consent to her going. You know—foreigner; thought I would kill her, never come back alive. So I had to make him."

"But what did you do, Dave?" she demanded in a kind of agony of suspense.

"Why, I—I knocked him down," he said. "There wasn't time to go get a policeman, you see. I suppose Zalinsky could have had me jailed. But I had operated on the wife by that time. And she was all right. Of course, he was drunk—that takes away all the glory."

"Not at all!" she remonstrated. "He could have pulled out a pistol."

"And missed."

"He'd have hit," Nancy stated, with great decisiveness. "You were a hero."

"From the beginning," he admitted.

"I won't ever ask you again!" she said in high dudgeon.

"Which is something," he told her.

And they both laughed.

Ah, if only David could have knocked down a poor drunken foreigner every night and so remained a magnificent hero! Or if Nancy and he could have moved on forever, like modern Gipsies, from one new romance of Kerrigan Street to another—without allowing the hour of newness ever to fade or the imps of conquest to overtake them!

Well then, this particular story would never have been written, of course.

AND yet Nancy was not wondering about marriage, particularly in those days of early spring. Its success or failure was holding out no interesting problem to her. She was only living happily from day to day with David.

She did not even realize that spring itself was at hand, so dim and delicate was the gray-green tracery on the few trees of Kerrigan Street and so busy were her days. Spring might have come, indeed, and trembled through the awakening days into gorgeous summer without her knowing it had it not been for the visitor she had in the kitchen.

But never after that!

Just a stray bluebird he was, flirting and ruffling his feathers on the window-sill. A saucy little bluebird, which stared at her with audacious impertinence and cocked his head on one side and sped nimbly to the other end of the sill and cocked his bright eye once again at her. A bluebird on Kerrigan Street!

Straight from childhood and out of the past he might have come for the gray-eyed girl who watched him, bringing her pictures of Gaffney, the street-sweeper, and bright spring days in the garden, of Maggie and the kittens of Hand and the idyl of childhood in the big stone house on Morpeth Terrace.

A bluebird on Kerrigan Street!

The flirt of his wings was spring to her. In the garden just off Congress Avenue, green little shoots were tipping the cedars and pines; the crocus was taking a peek at the pergola, all dingy and a little stained after the winter. The grass was beginning to show a soft sheen, and the earth was all piquant, and everywhere in the garden fresh perfumes of growing things must be blowing through the shrubbery and along the paths.

And she was on Kerrigan Street, where the delicate gray tracery of the trees against the red-brick tenements of Franklin Park was the only sign that another summer was at hand. And she had not seen the country in months——

"Let's take just the afternoon off," she tempted David at lunch in the apartment. "It's a heavenly day—we're just missing every one of those fleecy clouds!"

"But it's my tonsil clinic, at two, Nan," he told her. "I can't possibly go——"

"But you never can go," she pointed out petulantly.

He spread out his hands.

"I'm a doctor," he said.

"You're a husband, too!" she retorted. "Or are supposed to be."

"That's the trouble with the doctor's existence," he remarked.

"I've just got to get out of here—out of every place!" she declared passionately.

"Why, go, Nan," he told her at once. "I didn't mean that you should mope round here just because I can't get out with you."

"I'll just have to!" she answered. "As soon as you're out of the house."

It was just the way she had felt at boarding-school on the Hudson, she told herself, as she dressed in front of the mirror a few minutes later; exactly the way she had felt when the gray February days had stretched on and on, and then suddenly the bright winter sun had come out on the whole brilliant stretch of the hills and the winter woods and the snow-swept river and fields. She had had to get out—out into the fields or the deep forest paths or down into the city into the glittering length of Fifth Avenue, with its beautiful windows, its procession of piquant faces and magnificent furs, its shining motor-cars and illuminated dusk.

She had felt part of the winter sunshine then; and now, to-day, she felt herself part of the soft spring breeze, part of the whole glorious afternoon.

Just to smell the garden once more, and bury her face in the new, shiny leaves of the maples, and forget all the dun ugliness of the sidewalks and pavements, the cobbles and tenements, the railroad-tracks and the scarred, grimy factories!

She put on the saucy mink furs she always wore when there was any chance of chill in the air—they gave her face such a dancing expression—and descended the stairs with swift little steps.

"May I take the car?" she asked David, where he washed the little heap of shining instruments in a corner of his white spick-and-span office.

"I won't need it," he said.

SHE was out on the sidewalk and pressing the starter almost before he had turned away. A second later she was threading her way through the heavy trucks and carts which impeded Kerrigan Street at that hour. No question about the arrival of spring, indeed, she noticed as she sped over the bridge. In little puddles, the last of the spring rains lay drying in the warm May sun, and a mile to the north the blue lake seemed almost to have a haze about it. On the sidewalks everywhere, games of marbles were in progress, groups of embattled rivals disputing the relative values of alleys and nibs. A real arched avenue of green, too, Congress Avenue was—stretching as far as the eye could reach, and everywhere the bright color of women's clothes.

"Ahoy, Nan!"

She caught the name amid the swiftly moving traffic in front of the Addams Building, and drew up to the curb deftly, between two limousines, looking back over her shoulder through the window. It was Breck Addams, crossing the street with quick steps.

"I wanted a lift," he said shamelessly.

"Where to?" she demanded. She was still obsessed with the idea of seeing the garden, of burying her face in the leaves.

"The country club," he said smilingly. "Where are you going?"

"Why, I *was* going to Morpeth Terrace," she retorted meaningly.

"But it's only eight miles out of your way," he pointed out.

"Well, I'm really only drifting, anyway," she explained. "I'll take you. Are you going to play golf?"

"Not now." He grinned pleasantly. "I am going with you—and Hermann is going to put up a tea for us—and we are going to climb the gray rocks, where we can see the whole course, and where we will be as conspicuous as possible—and we are going to consume the tea and sit on this rug of Dave's and enjoy the first real afternoon of spring!"

"But—" she began.

He waved his hand impatiently.

"Don't interrupt," he retorted. "There go the gray poplars——"

"You're crazy, Breck!" she said.

But her cheeks held a fairly perceptible deepening color that had not been there a few minutes before as they went by Morpeth Terrace and the lawns on each side became wider and wider and the houses finer and grayer and bigger.

There was really no reason why she shouldn't, she reflected. It was perfectly all right. And it might not be much fun in the Morpeth Terrace garden after all. Aunt Minnie would probably be drying her hair out there this afternoon, or some other equally inspiring event would be taking place. There was a wonderful view from the perch on the gray rocks. And Breck was always a good deal of a mystery, requiring pleasant solving.

"It's not such a bad idea," she amended.

"In fact, quite sensible," he finished. "I'll order the tea the second we get in the driveway. Food makes anything reasonable."

She fell silent then as the houses of East Clewesbury seemed to run past like some perfectly oiled panorama and the curving roadways and little patches of forest that surrounded the club came into sight.

"I'll sit out here on the porch," she said at the entrance, with a curious, far-away look in her eyes. "I want to look at the shadows and the grass and the birds in the shrubbery."

This was something like it, indeed! Far stretches of sunlit grass, with graceful trees and shady hollows—and rock-fended roadways and a touch of rippling stream. It was as good as the garden on Morpeth Terrace, at least.

How far away Kerrigan Street seemed here! How curious, too, that she had not realized before to-day just how much she and David were missing! How suddenly it had seemed to come upon her!

"And now for the climb!"

It was Breck's voice, she realized. He had the tea in a big basket.

THEY climbed the pine-clad hill then, in and out of the big gray rocks, the scene growing under their eyes into long, graceful swells of even turf with shadows here and there from groups of elms and here and there a raised tee, and off to the south great slopes and woods, the far-off greens sunk in shadow, like fairy lawns in a dark forest.

On the very top, beside a great boulder, they made themselves comfortable.

"Some day," he said, "I'm going to write a real novel."

"The great American——"

"If I can make it," he said, with a grin.

She considered that at length.

"You would have to know a great deal, I should imagine——"

"An impossibility, I assume," he returned imperturbably.

"Well," she said, with a sudden animation, "wouldn't you have to know all sides of life—in Clewesbury, for instance?"

"Unquestionably."

"More than just Congress Avenue?"

"A little more." His irony was plain.

She stared out over the sweep of green sunlit country.

"Why don't you come down and work on Kerrigan Street?" she inquired. She picked a new blade of grass with careful precision.

"You don't seem to find it too promising—this afternoon," he ventured.

"I've been there all winter," she returned.

"Oh, I don't know," he remarked, after a pause. He seemed to lose his seriousness. "Why glad-hand the immigrant if you don't have to?"

She laughed at last.

"But you would get a new view of things, wouldn't you?" she inquired.

"Dave's view," he returned, a little scornfully.

"Well, what the matter with Dave's view?" she asked.

"No color," he retorted. "No romance. Just dirt! It doesn't attract me."

She looked at him a little curiously.

"What does attract you, Breck?" she inquired.

"Far places," he pronounced carefully. "Strange emotions, new faces, queer foods."

"Oh," she said slowly. For a few minutes she considered it, watching a distant golfer address an invisible ball hopefully and then make motions of evident distress. "Well," she added, "better not marry, then. You won't get any of those things—except queer food."

"Marriage shouldn't eliminate everything," he maintained.

"But it does, doesn't it?" she inquired, looking at him with her warm gray eyes.

"If you let it," he agreed. "But it's really only a question of a person's right to personality—personality and self-expression."

She stared out across the links once more.

"Maybe," she said.

"Good God, it shouldn't be a prison—you wouldn't maintain that, would you?" he asked.

"I?" she laughed. "I wouldn't maintain anything."

He stretched out comfortably, gazing at the late afternoon sky.

Nan was silent for some time. She was looking out over the deepening shadows and black forests and dark greens, slashed with the purple of the sunset behind the slopes.

"I suppose we'll have to be going," she said, with a sigh. "I've had a very nice time."

"*Moi aussi*," he returned, pulling himself to his feet stiffly. "I like to absorb wisdom."

"From me?" she said, with a smile. She seemed quite subdued.

"You are the only authority," he said gracefully.

"How?" she asked unexpectedly.

"Because my next book is about just one woman," he said quite seriously.

"Me?" she inquired laughingly.

"All of you rolled into one," he returned.

He rolled up the robe and took hold of the basket.

"I'll tell you about it some other time."

"I'd love to hear it," she answered.

A curious silence fell between them then as they picked their way down the path between the gray boulders, quite forbidding now in the shadows—a silence that lasted while they got rid of the basket and started down the road toward the city.

What a curious meeting and afternoon, Breck was thinking—the first time he had really ever had a chance to talk to her alone. Why, she was distinctly attractive—she gave a curious emotional effect; she had a kind of passionate enchantment that could not be defined. He would like to see a great deal of her.

He grinned to himself as they sped through the twilight past St. Peter's, down the motor-filled avenue glittering with a thousand lights.

Well, he better not begin that.

How long would it be before Nancy tired of Kerrigan Street?

He ceased grinning abruptly as they turned into the square and the hubbub of newsboys and crowds round the statues in the iron railings shut out everything from their ears except the roar of the city. Well, he better not be around when she did.

"I'll have to leave you, I'm afraid," he said, with sudden finality. "I'm due at the house about now—or I'd ride all the way out. Love to Dave, of course. By-by!"

"Good-night, Breck," she said, with a friendly smile. "Remember the book."

"I'll remember!" he called.

THAT was Nancy's first revulsion against Kerrigan Street—that natural rebellion against the prisoning streets of cities which comes at times to every one. And yet she did not count it so. For her, that conception was quite overshadowed by another. It was that for the first time since her marriage she had spent a whole afternoon alone with a man who was not David—and had enjoyed it. More, she had been consumed with a desire to experiment with Breck, to make a grimace at the imps of conquest. She had not flirted, but she had wanted to!

That was truly alarming. It pointed so unmistakably to a return of the vanished imps. And marriage had no such exhibits among its Lares and Penates. What was her right to self-expression if it became a desire which— Still, it had nothing to do with David, of course——

She shook off the unpleasant implication with difficulty. Yes; it did have something to do with David. Her personality seemed somehow to have become bound up with his, even if it were foolish to consider that marriage should make her whole world shrink just to him. There was nothing wrong or unfair to David in her spending that afternoon with Breck. But there was something doubtful about the part the imps might play.

She struggled with that through rather a silent evening—and then gave it up. To dissect one's happiness, she remembered dimly from boarding-school psychology, was to destroy it.

Nevertheless, the incident stayed in her mind in the weeks that followed, coloring slightly for the first time the view she took of youthful married life on Congress Avenue. A curious freedom about married life, and yet an odd restraint!

"Just out on bail, eh?" Breck laughed one afternoon, when he met her in the Bankers Trust Building and asked her over to the Pontiac and she refused.

Yes; that was it. Out on bail! She was apparently free and yet she wasn't. How was it that Mary Thomas could go motoring or play golf with Kenny Watson, although she was married and her husband slaved down-town all day at the Fidelity? Or Eleanor Carter could write a play with George Camden of the *Press*, and spend all her mornings with him, because that was his only time off?

Well, it must be, she decided finally, because they did not allow the imps of conquest to have any influence in their relations. That must be the solution. You could toy with the imps as much as you liked so long as you did not give in to them.

IT WAS that conclusion which impelled her to say "Yes" finally to Kitty Sassoon's urgent invitations to go with her and Breck and Kenny to the afternoon-tea dances at the Georgian. Perhaps some gaiety would do her good after the spell of warm weather.

She dressed with unwonted excitement in the little apartment and hurried up-town in the pleasant afternoon. Why, she hadn't been to a tea-dance in ever so long! There couldn't be anything wrong in this.

The afternoon itself, once she got to the Georgian, was almost like a scene of general rejoicing, of welcome.

"Welcome to our city! Out of retirement! They all come to it!"

A tiny flush of pleasure flooded her cheeks at the spontaneity and warmth of her welcome. Why, she and David had been burying themselves! That was why she had felt the lack of adventure. How foolish she had been not to have come here before! There was no reason on earth why married people should be hermits. She should have insisted on David coming with her to the Thursday-evening dances, and at least once or twice a week here in the afternoon. She had almost forgotten the color and gaiety, the lights and the glasses and the sapphire lake just outside the windows.

A little music and a little dancing made everything different!

"We must go some afternoon, Davie," she told him rapturously that night under the shaded candles. "It was no end of fun. I'd forgotten how much fun it was."

"Since you married the old man?"

"But you've got young ideas!" she sang gaily, quoting a popular song. "You really must!"

"We'll take a whole evening to it and do it up brown," he told her. "Theatre, dinner, supper, dancing, midnight cabaret!"

"Oh, just my style!" she agreed instantly.

They did that, too, about a week later—with Breck and Kitty Sassoon—staying until after one o'clock and every one had gone and the waiters had begun to mutter and roll up the cloths.

"Wasn't it grand, Davie?" she demanded of him in the little bedroom an hour later.

"It was immense," he said. "The only unpleasant thing is that the little Tomazolli child has developed a high fever—so Miss Vassilof's note says. "I'll have to go over there now, I'm afraid."

"Oh, to-night?" she asked disappointedly.

"Might be too late to-morrow," he said.

"Oh!" she said slowly.

She watched him go out then and heard the noise of the motor starting, with a little thoughtful look in her eyes.

But she did not hear anything more until she woke some time later and realized drowsily that he had returned—and there was a gray light in the bedroom.

It must be morning. But it had been a gay evening, anyway. She would like to do it a lot.

It was one of David's few appearances, however.

"I'm afraid I can't go places afternoons at all," he told her, a week later, in what she called his "grandpa manner," when she tried to persuade him to go to a tea-dance. "But that's no reason why you shouldn't go with the crowd and have a good time. Get Breck to go."

"But I feel better when you're along," she said plaintively. "I feel so sort of—oh, sort of piggy when you aren't, and I am having a wonderful time and you are down here looking down some child's bad throat."

"But you can't help that, Nan," he told her.

"No; I know I can't," she admitted.

"Then why worry?"

Well, the other girls didn't, she admitted to herself, as she dressed a little later. The men weren't to be pitied, anyway, as a matter of fact. They didn't want to do these things very much. Not the husbands. Wasn't it queer that husbands always seemed interested in business or hospitals or law offices or banks, and couldn't seem to find an instant for anything else—unless it were golf? It was only single men who seemed to like to play round.

"Though David is really hipped on his subject, I'm afraid," she told Breck, with a little laugh. "He lectures me at a frightful rate sometimes."

"Criticizes—" Breck began.

"Oh, no!" she interrupted. "Just tells me what's the matter, and what a shame it is. You know—politics, and industrial revolution and things like that."

"Things to worry about, I suppose," remarked Breck cheerfully.

"It's really very interesting at times."

"If you only didn't have to live with it," he supplied.

"Maybe that's it," she agreed.

IT COULDN'T really be so very important, either, she decided finally. There was never any mention of it at lunch on Morpeth Terrace. And certainly her father was a well-informed man. No one ever talked about such things at the Georgian Club, either. A lot of foreigners whose ideas and ideals couldn't ever be ours! That's what the people beyond Pollock's bar were, she gathered of an afternoon. Let them go back to Europe, if they didn't like it in Clewesbury. This idea of David's of doing something about democracy—it was probably just one more of his ideas. That was all.

That was the extent of her real understanding of David's feelings and ideas during that first summer they lived in the Brotherhood House. She was not sharing in that slow conviction that was growing in his mind then, any more than he was sharing in her first dim attempts to ward off the return of her imps of conquest. She was simply regarding him with good-natured affection while she indulged the imps—oh, just a little!

There was a certain air of excitement, of pleasurable sensation about the tea-dances that accorded well with the views of the imps, without being in the least dangerous.

What better outlet could the imps find? Well, they would never have asked for any better one, I am sure, could they have spoken and made known their desires. An outlet that led quite certainly and pleasantly back to the existence Nancy had known before her marriage—that was what the outlet in reality was. Why should imps of conquest desire anything better?

She was drifting almost imperceptibly in the last weeks of the summer as she went out more and more afternoons and an occasional evening without David.

David looked on with unthinking approval, too. The thing could never have meant anything to him. There was always a touch of the philosopher about him—with his eyes upon his fine theories of humanity and his gaze averted from the shiftless beggar before him. Any thief could aways have stolen his watch while he descanted to him upon the value of time.

And there was before him just then a tiny glimmering of that light of duty he always followed in the tenement streets of Clewesbury—that light on which he kept his gaze fastened lest he lose its guiding ray forever in the confusion and disorder of the uproar. A mere maelstrom of races and creeds—this Kerrigan Street, where was supposed to be weaving that new tapestry of the future. A maelstrom without any issue but chaos, with no characteristic but noise. That was the way the tenements affected him at first. A vast conglomerate mass of waving arms and shouting voices and loud-mouthed, loose-lipped conviction—appearing before him now as Anton Fechter, talking of his Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the brotherhood of industry just round the corner; now as Anzia Lublin, with her bitter cry of the outsider beating in vain on Anglo-Saxon walls of culture; again as Zalinsky, with his Hebraic dramatic ability, bringing down the Red curse on reactionary clothing contractors! A veritable babel of beliefs and prejudices that beat on his brain like a thousand hammers, beating, hammering, smashing the truth into a thousand distorted pieces——

HE HAD not caught the first glimmer of understanding until he had gone with Fechter that rainy March night. He had climbed the ill-lighted stairs then, to the bare hall over the Greek candy store, with a distinct expectation of one more steam-hammer, trip-hammer mental blow. Only when he had gazed on the three hundred poorly dressed men round the old desks and tables under the gaslight had he been aware of his immense relief. Why, they were studying, he had seen at once. They were not going to say anything!

He never forgot that evening in the cold hall when he sat back in his overcoat on a rear bench and listened to Fechter teaching the principles of production and distribution, and nineteen different accents made response in broken English and he caught a glimpse of the industrial struggle at work.

It was his first glimmer of light. Why, this was life in America, here—this was the American ideal on Kerrigan Street—a union! That was the thing to call out courage and allegiance! A union!

"Why, damn it all," he told Breck a few days later in the pleasant dim grill of the Lotos Club; "that's all they see of America! The Brotherhood House ought to be a regular forum for every foreigner, society, union and what-not in Clewesbury. It ought to represent America to them just as much as their union does."

"If you can find any America to represent," Breck remarked.

"I mean *our* America," he retorted. Only a person or a Brotherhood House that stood for the ideal of a real democratic America could ever tear away from such men as these the class prejudice which their new position in this strange land seemed to render inevitable. A person who did something about it! And did not merely talk Americanism at them!

John Foster made that clear to him a few days later in the study of the Second Presbyterian Church on Fifty-fourth Street.

"Yes," he told him; "you have got to do two kinds of doctoring in your job. And I don't know but that the social disease is the worse. I remember the first time I ever got inside the skin of the men who do the hard physical work of this country. It was in the town of Limonowa, over in Poland. I was working and studying conditions in Europe's Kerrigan Streets in preparation for this ministry of mine here. The town was full of returned laborers from America—mostly from Buffalo and the steel companies there.

"The views they held were astonishing. Why, I couldn't tell them that our church was for any one except the bosses. Our police and judges and government, either. Some of them had worked here four years and never been spoken to by an American except to be cursed. 'Democracy' was the phrase the steamship agents used to get men to America—that was what they said. A Russian in the town—a liberal professor from Kief, exiled by the czar—wouldn't believe after three weeks of argument that I wasn't over to get my claws on the immigrants for my church even before they came to America.

"Why wouldn't they think that? Their own churches were just part of the system of oppression and exploitation, its clergy of Junker persuasion, its only object perpetuation of power. That was their first idea about ours."

In the dim church study, Foster walked up and down slowly.

"I wandered all over southeastern Europe for two years, soaking up their ideas. I found nationality made no difference in the immigrants' point of view. The system was the same everywhere—Junker clergy, Junker landed aristocracy, Junker industrial magnates, whether in Austria or Russia or Germany. Incredible intolerance! That was the thing they were escaping from when they came over here—or thought they were escaping.

"They came here expecting a fair, square deal, liberty and equality of opportunity. Every time they didn't get it, for some reason or other, they naturally jumped to the conclusion that America was just like Europe. They didn't like the men who ran the country.

"That's why it is your job, Dave, and mine, here, and every decent American's, to see that they get that square deal, and understand that we have a democracy here, not another Europe. Show them what America means to us, so that they'll get the spirit of the enterprise. Show them we don't consider them just so much dirt, so much labor, but new citizens, new neighbors, new friends.

"It's a double task, too. I remember I only saw one side of it when I started in. But I soon saw the other side. I had to understand, of course, the background and ideas of the foreigners who had invaded our church's neighborhood here in Clewesbury. But when I got back and went to work at the Second Presbyterian, I found that the other half of my job was educating and convincing the members of my own church. Who is on your executive committee?"

"Dr. Musson, Mrs. Edmunds, Forrester Stone, Herbert Pratt, Dr. Dunstan and myself," David told him.

"Well, I would start my campaign on them, then, too," Foster advised him significantly. "What Congress Avenue doesn't know about Kerrigan Street is just about equal to what Kerrigan Street doesn't believe about Congress Avenue. Lots of my parishioners have gotten their revolutionary ideas *since* they came here—have been reluctantly forced to them by disappointment."

In the small study, the brown-faced minister paced the floor, his eyes keen and slight.

"I tell you, Dave, you'll find your problem much the same as mine. Christ taught that human rights have got to take precedence over property rights. Americanism isn't something half of the people can force down the throats of the other half—merely because they got here first. It isn't an inherited, completed jewel. It is a growth, an ideal, grounded on faith in the possibilities of the ordinary man, a path leading toward political, industrial and social brotherhood. We've all got to live together—and my congregation all live out in Quaker Heights and never see Fifty-fourth Street except on Sunday. They're devoted to the church, too. They've stuck to it through thick and thin and given their money, even though they haven't always understood and don't live within five miles of here any more. But some one has got to tell them what South Clewesbury is thinking—and why. You'll find that is half of your job in the Brotherhood House."

Real Christian democracy—that seemed to be John's idea, David reflected, as he took his way back to Kerrigan Street. Well, a thing like that had a great many implications.

HE BEGAN to realize in the fall how many and how far-reaching those implications could be as he superintended the installation of the dispensary and began the health-survey which the Federated Charities campaign had made possible. Why, this was an adventure involving a lifetime of study and devotion, if he meant to make it count for anything! It might lead to unsuspected places and trails. And yet its success, of course, would be the actual, real thing—the achievement he and Breck had mooned about so sentimentally at college.

That would be worth while, if he had it in him to do it.

Did he? Or would he let the Brotherhood House become another case of drifting?

That was the question that was growing slowly in his mind in those weeks of the fall while Nancy was giving the imps just a tiny bit more rein with each passing day.

And yet they might have gone on indefinitely, without any result, had it not been for the curious twist which Fate gave Nancy's existence just then.

A vivid picture it was that came to her suddenly one noon, as she drove past a hot-chestnut stand down-town—a picture of falling leaves and half-open chestnut burs under the big chestnut tree at the far end of the Morpeth Terrace garden. She turned her machine eastward, up the long yellow-and-brown length of Congress Avenue almost at once. Why, she hadn't been up home in a month!

"I've come for lunch," she announced to Maggie at the door.

"There's only enough for one," said Maggie promptly.

"Then I'll go right in," she answered. It was their invariable joke now—relic of school-days when Nancy had run through the streets like one possessed so as to be in time for lunch. There would be just enough for one, Maggie would inform her in the morning—first come, first served! "Are they in?" she added.

"Just speaking," nodded Maggie.

She surveyed her father and Aunt Minnie at lunch, filled with sudden amusement at the truth of Maggie's description. Yes; just speaking, and nothing more! That seemed to be the chronic state of these two inhabitants of Morpeth Terrace. How did they manage to keep it up year after year? And no one had even picked up the chestnuts from under the trees.

Mischief seemed to flood her being to overflowing at the thought. They were Aunt Minnie's favorite nuts, she knew, but that lady would have died rather than pick up any from under her brother's tree without his express invitation. Minnie much preferred the rôle of chestnutless martyr, persecuted by her brother's selfishness and thoughtlessness. Had the quarrel come to a head this fall yet?

"Are the chestnuts—" she began.

But Minnie forestalled her.

"I see by the paper," she said uncompromisingly, "that your David addressed the Amalgamated last night."

"Oh, did he?" queried Nancy.

"Weren't you there?" asked Minnie.

"I was at the Rialto and the Georgian with Breck and Kitty."

"Oh!" responded Minnie. She ate her dessert very carefully while her brother rose and left word with Maggie that Mr. Stone should wait when he came. "You find Mr. Addams very interesting?" she murmured then.

"You mean 'amusing,'" corrected Nancy.

"He's so literary and clever, I suppose."

"Oh, so!" agreed Nancy ironically.

"And David's best friend."

"Yes; his best friend."

"Isn't it fortunate," purred Minnie, "that you get on so wonderfully well? Most wives find their husbands' friends so uninteresting."

"And lucky they do, do you mean?" asked Nancy cheerfully.

"What do you mean?" inquired Minnie coldly.

"Oh, Aunt Min," protested Nancy, "you're so transparent! Do you think I am having an affair with Breck?"

"Why, I—" began Minnie.

But Nancy interrupted her in her turn.

"Don't worry." She smiled. "Breck is too easy."

Aunt Minnie was really too simple, she thought, as she arranged with Maggie for the chestnuts and went into the music-room to seat herself at the piano, turning idly the leaves of "L'Ame des Iris," half improvising the accompaniment. Why, any one could get Breck's interest who was even half-way attractive and feminine! There was no achievement in that—nothing that would require many meetings and dances and teas. Conquest was only really exciting and satisfying when they were sure of themselves or thought they didn't like you or were extremely conceited——

She half rose from the piano at the sound of the door-bell before she remembered that she was not on Kerrigan Street now and there were people to answer bells here.

"Mr. Stone, I suppose," she said half questioningly to Aunt Minnie.

"Yes," that lady answered, after an instant's attention to the voices in the hall.

"Oh!" said Nancy.

SHE was oddly meditative as she stood by the rose-colored seat beneath the picture of Wagner, one knee on the upholstery, while the footsteps down the hall proclaimed that Mr. Stone had been shown into the library—as if perhaps she was thinking of the last time Mr. Stone had entered her life for an hour. Not much over a year ago that had been—and she was married! Completely unchanged were the garden, the pergola, the poplars. Completely unchanged, too, were the big, wide stairs back of her, the blue-hung dining-room, the big Derby vases where once the giants had crouched, the better to seize you as you made a rush for the stairs in the twilight.

Well, was she not completely unchanged, too? Was she not merely Nancy Van Wyck, grown older, more sophisticated, but otherwise unchanged?

"Tell Stone I'll be right down."

It was the voice of Andrew Van Wyck from the landing above the stairs, where he stood, cigar in hand, looking down for an instant before he went back into his room.

"I will," Nancy said impassively.

She stood a moment longer, like some vivid ghost of her old self, her hand at her throat in a curious attitude, before she turned from the window toward the library. And then she walked across the rugs and the hall, her eyes searching the big, oblong room for signs of the visitor as she held the heavy curtains apart at the doorway.

He was standing by the high book-shelves, she saw instantly, reading some thick volume by one of the tiny pottery lamps, one foot on the dark-wood settee, the spray of light falling across the white pages in his hand, throwing into relief the line of his clear-cut chin and big nose, softening the heavy mass of thick black hair above his high forehead.

"Father says he will be right down," she announced impassively.

"Thank you," he said.

He did not look up from his book. His voice held no intonation of any kind, either, unless it were that of complete detachment. She might have been a telephone instrument speaking from the wall. His eyes, too, were still actually reading the book he held in his hand. There was no pretense about it.

And he knew who she was perfectly!

For an instant, the girl by the doorway could not believe it. And then she named her emotion instantly. Indignation! Indignation at his rudeness, his discourtesy. When she had spent half of an afternoon with him, when she had been on his committee, when he must have heard her father call, when he knew there was only one Nancy Van Wyck! Vivid emotion flamed at the thought. And then she turned the electric switch under her hand by the curtain without waiting an instant.

Click!

Unmistakable it was, must have been, to any one in the room, followed as it was by the deep gloom of the library, only relieved by the grayness of the distant French windows where they looked out on the garden. Astonishing it must have been, too, for a visitor, left in the darkness with his open book, deprived of his light.

But it was just an instant that Nancy permitted herself to enjoy that picture. And then she turned and fled up the stairs, in her heart an incredible mixture of vivid pique and gloating triumph.

She would see Mr. Stone again!

WELL, if you had asked Clewesbury just then to select the man most unlikely to fall victim to feminine wiles, the chances are that the choice would have fallen on Forrester Stone. A man of iron resolve and intense ambition, without an intimate in the world, so Congress Avenue would have told you. Where would a woman find any place in his grim scheme of things?

Distinctly a tribute to the man's personality, indeed, was the impression the New Yorker had made on Clewesbury in one short year. Why, he was the brains and dynamo of many a Wall Street dynasty with which his name did not appear! He kept a villa on the Shore Road, although he was only in town three days a week. He was the confidential adviser of more than one great and mysteriously powerful corporation of lower Broadway—a sort of Metternich of finance, a Bismarck of industry. At the age of thirty-eight, he devoted three days a week to Clewesbury and A. J. Van Wyck only for some enormous monetary consideration. And all he sold was his brains, his advice. It wasn't likely—was it?—that he would care who turned out a light on him in a library.

The question ran through Nancy's mind half seriously, half humorously, as she answered David's questions at dinner that night. Yes; she had had a nice time, she told him. No; nothing had happened—just her father and Aunt Minnie, and—and that was all. But that wasn't all, she told herself whimsically. Far from it! Why, she had not been so ignored in years, despite her success in making the man ridiculous! It seemed incredible that such a small thing could rouse one so—when she did not care in the least for the man. But—but—his tone of absolute indifference!

She considered the thing at length on the davenport next morning, staring out into the dirty confusion of Kerrigan Street. It would be only a matter of time, of course, before she met him somewhere. He did not go to the dances at the Clewesbury Club, and winter precluded golf. But he had business conferences with her father at least once a week. It would only be a question of time before she saw him again. And when she did—well, when she *did!*

She spent the next few days in half-serious contemplation of that pleasant moment.

It was not until the end of the second week, however, that she had a definite idea. She called for her father noons then, eying the big bronze doorways of the Van Wyck

Building expectantly while she waited in the clear, crisp November air.

It was only a question of time before she would see Stone if she called for her father and had lunch at the house every noon.

Fortune rewarded her on the fourth day.

"Do you want to drive up the avenue, father?" she asked, carefully ignoring the tall figure which stood beside him.

"Around by the bank first," he replied. "Unless you've got some errand, Stone."

"Nothing that won't wait till after lunch," that gentleman replied.

She watched the traffic from in front of the bank a few minutes later as if she had forgotten Stone's existence in the coupé. He was looking at her, too, she was quite certain—probably at the furs which matched her hair so well and made her neck look so pretty. Did he know she had turned out the light on him?

"Are you always your father's chauffeur, Mrs. Carpenter?" he inquired.

"Oh, invariably," she replied.

For an instant there was silence in the coupé. And then Forrester Stone laughed.

"Well, I didn't mean it quite that way."

"Or you didn't mean it at all," she retorted, staring straight ahead.

"Or I didn't mean it at all," he agreed, with an inexplicable gleam of amusement in his eyes.

That was a good enough beginning, Nancy thought to herself, as her father got in again and she steered the motor deftly through the traffic jam round the square and headed straight out Congress Avenue. He would not dare try conventional inanities on her, at any rate.

She listened with unusual intentness at luncheon, trying to understand the plans and schemes which seemed to make up existence for her father. Just a dim idea in her mind that the days of active operation of the potteries were over, a hazy conception, too, that deals of some indefinite sort—such as the building of the Van Wyck Building, the fight with Mr. Morris and the Common Council over the new Union Station and the Clewesbury Hotel site, the enlargement of the harbor so as to accommodate the ore-boats from Lake Superior and allow shipment to Pittsburgh over the Clewesbury Southern—that things of this sort took up the time now of Andrew Van Wyck's clerks and associates.

United Clothing—that was the latest plan, too. She knew that because of her father's trips to Chicago and New York, and the reiteration of Sam Lewisohn's name.

"Hasn't Anton Fechter something to do with that?" she inquired.

Keen, sardonic amusement sprang in Mr. Van Wyck's eyes.

"Well, not if we can help it," he replied, with a grin. "Why?"

"Because I know him," she replied.

"You do?" It was the first time that Forrester Stone had appeared to notice her existence. "Where did you meet him?"

"My husband knows him," she explained.

"Oh, does he come to the Brotherhood House?"

"Once in a while," she nodded.

She stared at him coolly, too, so that he seemed to hesitate before he continued.

"I'd like to see the new dispensary at the Brotherhood House and meet your husband."

"We would be delighted, I'm sure," she said. She did not dare glance at her father's face or at Aunt Minnie's. Evidently he did not know of the peculiar relationships of the family. He would probably invite her father to go with him next, she thought.

She devoted herself to the dessert with a pleasant little tingle of satisfaction in her heart. Well, getting his interest had been even easier than she had expected.

"Call me up some day when you are going past and I'll show you over the place," she said to him carelessly as she deposited them at the Van Wyck Building an hour later. "We're really quite proud of it now."

"I won't forget," he repeated.

"Nor will I," she assured him.

And she drove off with a little smile.

She spent the next few days in a state of delightful uncertainty, answering the telephone every time that the bell rang with a tiny flutter of excitement. It might be he! No particular plan in her mind, of course, should he actually come.

But was he going to call?

SHE recognized his voice instantly on the fourth day, however, a tiny wave of exultation sweeping over her as she stood at the 'phone. So he had meant to call, after all! Yes; it would be perfectly convenient, she assured him. No; her husband was not in, but he would be back later, in

was the latest
t because of her
and New York
Lewisohn's name
something to do

nt sprang in Mr.

it," he replied,

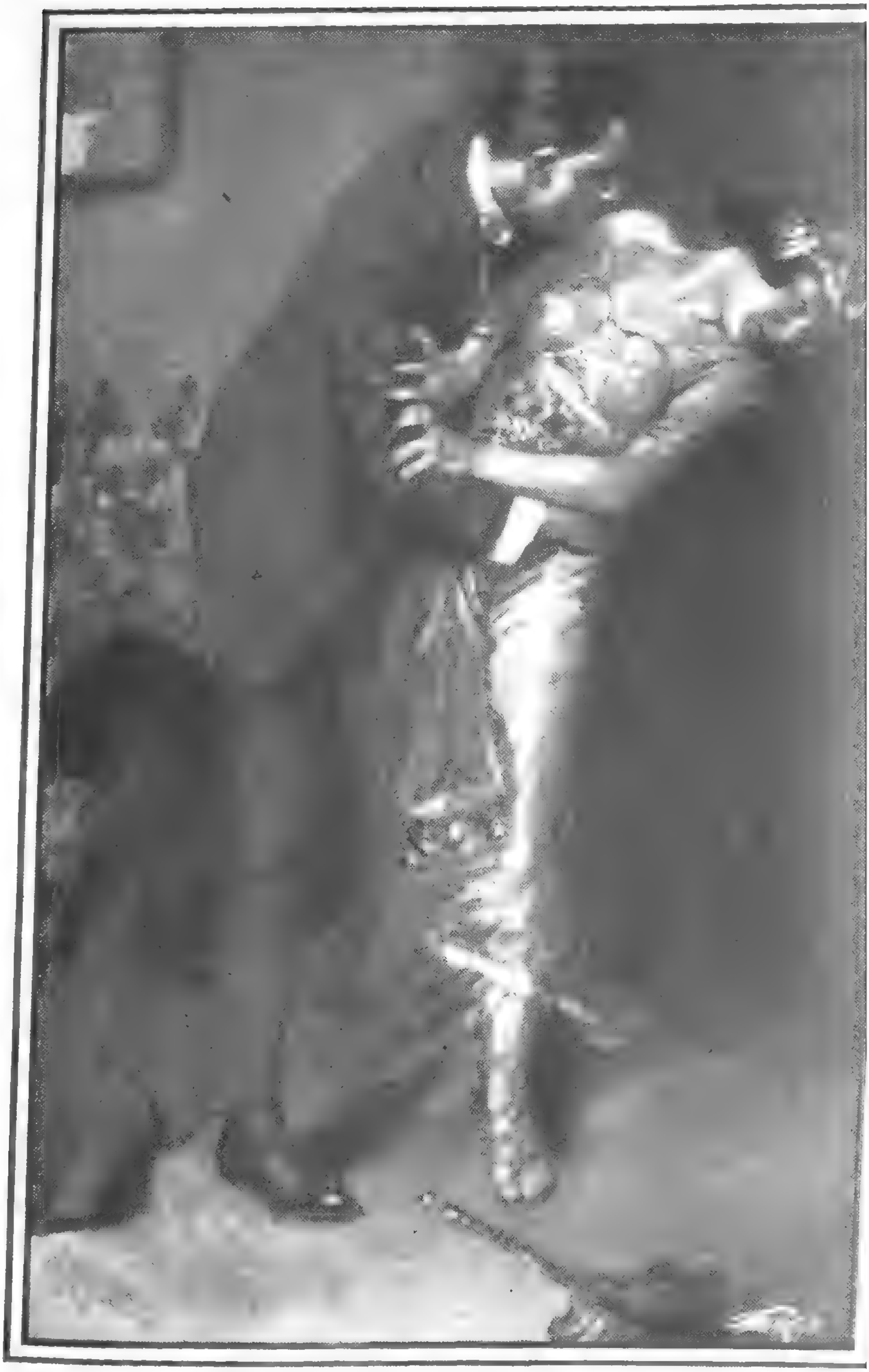
e replied.
first time that
d to notice her
meet him?"
' she explained
e Brotherhood

ded.
oo, so that he
ontinued.
pensary at the
et your hus-

m sure," she
t her father's
dently he did
nships of the
invite her
thought.
dessert with
ction in her
t had been
d.
u are going
place," she
sited them
hour later.
w."

nile.
n a state
ring the
ang with
night be
mind, of

ntly or
wave"
e stood
to call
y con-
[illegible]
[illegible]



"I'm going to kiss you," he said. And he bent over her. She felt rather faint. "You're crazy!" she said abruptly. "Let me go!"

plenty of time. So he had meant to call all along, she repeated to herself as she put down the receiver. But what was really in his mind to make him come down here? That was the question. Was there anything resembling what was in hers? Or was this a real, bona-fide call to see the Brotherhood House and Kerrigan Street? Had she roused any interest herself, or was he merely coming on business? The thought brought her to a sudden halt as she laid out her black-and-gold afternoon dress in the bedroom a moment later.

It was possible, of course, that he was playing a game as well as she. No Breck Addams, this Forrester Stone. He did not do things without reason or purpose, or simply to fill in a full afternoon. Was he, too, playing a game of some sort?

SHE watched him quite closely for any signs of that, as she took him over the Brotherhood House an hour later. But he really seemed to be genuinely interested, she admitted to herself, as she led him up the winding stairs to the drawing-room of her own apartment. He seemed to have a decidedly real interest in finding out just what the Brotherhood House was doing—even down to where Anzia Lublin had come from, and what money was spent for what, and David's lunches with Anton Fechter over in Moynihan's saloon.

There was no evidence of any game about that!

"It's not entirely a vicarious interest, of course," he told her abruptly before the wood fire. "Edmunds and your father have left these charity interests in my hands."

"Oh, I see," Nancy murmured.

"I'm to take Edmunds' place on the board next month."

He felt an instant regret the moment he had said it. To him there seemed to be a kind of conviction of folly about this whole afternoon somehow.

There had been no vital reason why he should go over this settlement house again with her this afternoon—not a real one. The information would have come in plenty of time through the regular channels. . But he had called her up on impulse—rare occurrence! Something he would never have done in New York. He had wanted to see what she would do next—after that surprising moment in the library when she had plunged him and his volume of "Europe Since 1815" into darkness. An absolutely original girl!

That was the real reason he had come—there was no use trying to avoid the fact. Van Wyck had maintained an inscrutable silence on the subject, even down to the name of his son-in-law. The old man was no fool, of course. He had no use for his son-in-law, apparently, or any overweening affection for his daughter. But, then, you never could tell. A man like that never showed anything. A daughter—any woman, in fact—was a factor not to be ignored, never to be neglected.

In the pleasant November dimness he stared at her, conscious of her youth and slender grace in the glow of the fire. Well, she was attractive enough.

"Do you hold any position?" he inquired.

"Not unless it's that of general truant."

"I don't believe that," he said gallantly.

"But it's true," she told him.

"Well, Palm Beach or Hot Springs would be more amusing just now," he admitted, with a smile.

"I shouldn't object." She shrugged her shoulders.

"But you can't run a settlement there," he suggested tentatively.

"Nor have a doctor for a husband."

"No. He is very much interested, of course."

The remark brought him up short, indeed. Just what sort of man was it who married a girl like this and then brought her down in this hole and expected her to be happy? He could not be just an ordinary doctor. She would never have married any second-rate chap. And this Brotherhood House stamped him as being out of the general run. Settlements were distinctly apart from the vital business of life. The people who ran them and made a life-work of it were usually filled with some religious motive. It was possible, though, that this man was one of those windbag leaders who had caught her on some religious rebound and fired her imagination for the time being. And had wakened to find she was married.

That would explain old Van Wyck's silence.

Nothing except some such disagreement could account for his coldness to such a captivating young person. Why, she had a kind of passionate charm that was indefinable, just sitting in this drawing-room—

she seemed all graceful lines, all rounded arms and knees, if you could take your glance away from her golden-gray eyes and white throat. She did not belong on this gray, filthy street in this city by the lake. She belonged on Fifth Avenue, in the Ritz, at Lenox and Newport or Westchester. She was sophisticated enough to hold her own there. No modest violet could have grown up in that Morpeth Terrace house. And she had more than a touch of the old man's brains. Wasting them down here in a settlement house!

"It isn't very exciting for a woman, I imagine," he remarked, with an effort at continuity.

"Oh, I don't know," Nancy said, with her curiously intriguing intonation. "I manage to have a good time."

"You do?"

"Oh, Clewesbury isn't New York," she said, with a tiny laugh. "But we manage to enjoy ourselves pretty well. Have you ever been to the Georgian in the afternoon?"

"No—hardly," he said, with a grin he could not suppress. What would Wall Street say to him tea-dancing at the Georgian? The idea brought a kind of grim laughter with it. He, who never had an instant to himself that did not have to be used somehow, who carried his office and Moran, his secretary, and part of his library with him wherever he went—he, dancing!

"Don't you dance?" she inquired. There was almost a kind of astonishment in her tone.

"Not your dances, I fear," he said humbly.

"What kind do you dance?" she inquired.

"I haven't danced in ten years," he said.

"Not at all?"

"Not at all."

He could not remember dancing, as a matter of fact, since the Artists Ball at the Astor—that masquerade to which he had only gone because Charles S. Steele had said he would give him a final answer there on the publicity contract of the Atlantic Life.

"What a pity!" she cried. "You must miss it!"

"Oh, I don't know—" he began.

"You've just stayed a hermit," she pointed out.

"Not exactly that," he remonstrated. The sixth floor of Two-twenty Broadway would hardly call him a hermit.

'I know just how you feel."

He looked at her with an odd mixture of amusement and uneasiness as she went across the room to the mahogany cabinet by the wall and took out a small pile of records. What was she going to propose now? That they dance? Distinctly this was not his province——

"Here's a real jazzy thing!" she cried enthusiastically. "I'll show you the fox-trot."

It was on his lips to protest, to refuse—it would simply be making a fool out of him! But she had his hands before he could make his refusal effective.

"The easiest thing in the world," she said gaily. "Put your arm round me and count just like this—one, two, three, four, and then two side-steps—it's straight forward and then back, you know, and you can do what you like in the side-slides, or even put in the funny little forward-and-back run."

"I see," he said helplessly.

WELL, it was an exceedingly ridiculous affair—he, Forrester Stone, fox-trotting to a phonograph in the late afternoon with a very flushed and youthful person who held him very close. Like a kind of enchantress's potion, indeed, that warm, youthful embrace of hers, the perfume of her shoulders and hair intoxicating him just a trifle.

But he forgot the ridiculous side of it with surprising suddenness as soon as he caught the dance-step a moment later. Why, the dance was really quite catchy!

"You must come over to-morrow to the Georgian," she told him at the end of ten minutes. "I am going there with Breck Addams. Come over about five and I'll give you more chance to practise. You'll be crazy about it as soon as you get it down pat."

"Yes; I can see I might," he said, with odd enthusiasm. "Why, I haven't been so gay in years!"

"Nothing to what you can do if you try," she told him lightly. "You'll be all right."

Or all wrong, he told himself, as he went stubbornly down the stairs to his automobile a half-hour later. No; he would not stay until her husband came home. He wouldn't wait another minute. Why, she was an absolute little enchantress! How had he happened to overlook it before?

And she knew it! He could swear she knew it! She seemed absolutely deliberate in her attempts to rouse his emotions. Either that, or she was without exception the most soul-stirring, maddening person he had ever met.

NEITHER the grave ceremony of dinner at the Edmunds' nor the talk in the library afterward effaced that impression for him that evening. He caught himself debating the question with a gravity and a weighing of remarks, smiles and glances that were almost schoolboyish in their absurdity. What color a girl like that brought into a man's life! What color—or disaster! All depending upon whether she was sincere or not.

The answer to that, of course, ought to determine whether he should accept her invitation to drop in at the Georgian Club at five for a dance. And yet he knew enough to take care of himself. There was no reason why he should take her too seriously. Nothing was involved but a rather refreshing glimpse of youth and beauty. It really didn't matter what she meant so long as she made a pleasant, entertaining hour for him.

Morning brought an ordinary, matter-of-fact decision. Well, he would drop in if he found time, if he got the statements of the Mandelbaum factory into intelligible shape and survived the meetings of the Clewesbury Potteries and the railway conference. It would brace him for the evening, like a cocktail of some sort—a draft of youth.

He caught himself pulling out his watch at the railway conference in the late afternoon, however, with an odd feeling of hurry that made him smile as soon as he realized it. Yes; he was going, of course! There was no use trying to fool himself—only these verbose idealists did that. He guessed he had meant to drop in from the beginning. Such flashes of color didn't come every day—not in a whole summer of week-ends out on Long Island or along the Sound.

And, after all, he hadn't had a minute off in nearly two years.

He felt a little silly as he mounted the steps of the Georgian and gave his hat to the trim maid by the ivy-trellised doorway of the grill. But the feeling vanished quickly enough as soon as he looked in and saw the crowd. All ages, he recognized instantly, and a really irresistible—what was it, a fox-trot?

There was really something fascinating about it.

"Hello!"

He saw his whilom partner dancing with Breck Addams at the same instant, and she waved at him in return and then stopped.

"Our table's in the far corner!" she called.

"All right," he replied smilingly.

There was a kind of vivacity to the scene, he reflected, as he sat by the table waiting for the music to cease—a kind of vivacity that probably passed for life to people who did not lead very exciting existences, people whose time hung heavy on their hands. It might hold a distinct change for men like himself, too—like golf or bridge at five-thirty in the club, with a drink or two to liven things up. It had its function right enough. And for women, probably, it was life itself—emotion, bright clothes, music and gaiety.

He acknowledged the introduction to Breck Addams perfunctorily—the local literary celebrity, he remembered dimly—and held Nancy's hand quite firmly.

"I really must thank you," he said formally. "It is decidedly surcease from all care."

"You haven't begun to enjoy it yet," she said instantly.

There was a very bright light in her golden-gray eyes, as if all the soft lamps on the tables had contrived to shine in her direction.

"You're sure you can get Kitty?" She turned to Breck.

"As sure as mere man can ever be," that individual returned.

"Then see if you can't," she begged. "Right away."

Then she sat down at the little green table almost concealed in the corner of the room by the palms, stripping off her light-gray gloves while he watched her in odd disquiet.

"I almost didn't make it," he said at last.

"Too selfish?" she queried.

"Busy," he said. She affected him powerfully, like wine, even here.

"I meant too busy rolling up dollars for yourself," she corrected coolly.

"Why, I've got beyond that, I think," he stated, after an instant's astonishment.

In the soft light he looked at her with veiled surprise. Why, she seemed to-day to have all the *savoir faire*, the intellectual touch of a society woman—not to resemble in the least the flushed, passionate creature who had stirred him so the afternoon before. Or was this only a pose?

"You do get to the trustee state, you know," he said a little coldly. She was probably not interested in the least.

"What do you mean by that?" she inquired.

"Why, building for the future," he replied precisely. Somehow, it irritated him to explain to her. He had intended to discuss other things.

"Whose future?" she inquired.

"Humanity's," he retorted.

She looked at him with sudden surprise, her lips parted.

"That's what David says!" she exclaimed.

"Others have said it, too," he agreed ironically.

But she appeared vitally interested.

"How do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean we are trustees entrusted with the employment of America's capital—for the future," he said. He would have to be polite, of course. "The ordinary person doesn't think—isn't capable of directing the employment even of his own savings. Our job is the proper employment of them—not so much to produce immediate profits to divide up among people whom it wouldn't benefit—they don't save, you know—but for the future. No rich man spends his fortune these days. He reinvests it. He feels he hasn't the right to spend it when progress demands every cent of capital it can get. Our generations are building for the future. That's how we have built the railroads, the art-galleries, the libraries. By thrift!"

"And that's your justification, I suppose." She smiled. "David says every man carries the justification for his acts in his own heart."

"It's my justification," he replied diplomatically, realizing suddenly that he was talking shop.

Somehow, she gave an essentially different impression from yesterday, he could not help thinking, as they ventured out on the shining floor a minute later, lured by the sound of a new Egyptian waltz. She gave an impression of reserve, of strength, of complete self-possession that was absolutely opposed to the abandon of her actions in the dim, firelit drawing-room.

He sat with her rather moodily while they watched Kitty Sassoon and Breck doing an intricate step.

"I'll have to be moving along, I fear," he said then, rather formally. "And I suppose it means I won't see you for some time again. You're always so busy——"

"Never too busy for my friends."

"But too busy for me?" he suggested.

She took the gauntlet up coolly.

"I have found you very interesting," she said.

He stared contemplatively at the dancers.

'Do you ever find yourself down-town for lunch?" he asked.

"I'm coming down to-morrow," she said. "The doctor's practise has knocked out any luncheon-hour in the apartment."

"Have lunch with me," he urged, with sudden desire.

She turned her gray eyes on him; and for the first time he saw they could be quite somber.

"Why, I will!" she replied. "It would be quite a lark."

THAT was the winter of Nineteen sixteen. Across the world, shadows of despair and death crept across the face of Europe. Embattled agony covered a thousand fields. And in the cities of sorrow stony-faced famine threatened what the god of War might spare. From the Baltic to the Rumanian shore the mailed fist crashed its bloody blows, while in Flanders and at Verdun heroism died in the mud that Paris and England might be saved.

But in Clewesbury, of the Middle East, existence was just slightly overcast by the shadow. An annoying thing, those submarine sinkings. And badly destructive of business. Why could not Germany stop them, and let every one be about his business? This European war would mean nothing to Clewesbury then.

No one could tell just what it was all about, anyhow, beneath the avalanche of conflicting propaganda. Belgium might be an accomplice or a victim, and Serbia a plotter or a fool. How could it be a war for democracy, either, with the troops of the czar invading East Prussia, and Germany, beset and embattled, breathing terrible charges against perfidious Albion, and a great party of social democracy supporting a kaiser? Clewesbury discussed that back and forth in the pauses of business.

A great ground-swell of good business, indeed, from this war so far—that was the only visible, real result. Out Cuyahoga Avenue way, overnight, the great Ludington works seemed to have risen. At night, too, down-town, men spoke of the doubling and tripling and quadrupling of the output at the Craven machine shops, at the Magnet Automobile factories. Why would not Germany quit this submarine nonsense and let every one go back to business before the whole European continent went into bankruptcy, as the *Evening Post* pointed out every night?

The expense of the thing would make them all stop pretty soon, anyway, as every economist knew.

War was a thing of the past!

Even Clewesbury would not wish to go on selling them on credit forever.

And yet there were a few who saw the plain future.

IN THE pottery-filled library on Morpeth Terrace, white-haired Andrew Van Wyck watched his publicity adviser smoke cigarette after cigarette as he walked up and down the softly lit room.

Where did the man get all his information?

"Why, Wall Street is practically unanimous on it!" Stone's voice was a trifle hoarse. "It's merely a question of time—the moment will come when the President can't keep our honor intact and keep us out of the war. And the people will choose war. The Anglo-French bonds are our guarantee of the way big finance feels about it. We'll go in on the side of the Allies—within a year."

Van Wyck's face was a study in granite.

"Well?" he remarked.

"It means we have a year to finish the whole thing," Stone retorted, a little contemptuously. "A year to persuade Lewisohn, reincorporate, get Klaw and Mandeville and Morris, Magnusson & Company in on it, exchange valuations, list the stock, underwrite it—Sam Harris will do it, he told me in New York yesterday—and put it on the market here to get our capital back and start operations."

He lit another cigarette.

"Whatever happens, then we'll be in shape—no matter which way the cat jumps. None of these piker, fly-by-night sweatshop concerns can bite off any such uniform-orders as Uncle Sam will place."

He rose and went to the book-shelves.

"It's just the Napoleonic wars and 1812 over again, with a little variation. We didn't keep out then; we sha'n't now."

He flung a big blue-covered volume on the table under the lamp.

"Read that when you get a chance. And then put the clamps on old Lewisohn, put them on hard. If he sticks out for cash, all the money in the country can't finance United Clothing. They've got to take stock! Good God! Aren't you putting in Mandelbaum's business; aren't you showing good faith? If they don't come in with us, we'll break them."

In the sudden silence, Van Wyck stared into the fire.

"Supposing the Germans win? Or the war stops?"

"You mean now—to-day?"

"Yes; before we get in."

Forrester Stone spread out his slender, muscular hands.

"We'll sell out our own stock to the public along with the underwriters."

"By God!" The admiration in Van Wyck's tone was plain.

"Though that's failure." Stone's voice took on a tone of grim determination. "We don't want to fail. We want to sell our common stock to the public, and some of our preferred simply on the same basis as some of the trusts did. Economies of operation, of buying, of selling, of advertising, of factory-costs—something can be done with the style question, too. I've got Onderdonk on a campaign on that now. This whole question of individuality in clothes, you know, has been brought on by the manufacturer himself."

"I used to buy mine from a pile in Garson's." Van Wyck nodded laconically.

"The cut-price mushroom concerns won't bother us. We'll disregard them."

"If they disregard us?"

"As they will. They'll be doing contracting for us in a year. In two years we'll tell labor where it gets off. We'll start to undermine 'em right at the start. Put some stool-pigeons in their unions. They're all foreigners—poor, ignorant. Ideal labor if they're let alone. We can continue the protocol till then."

In the silence the old man stared at the younger one with a curious light in his eyes.

"Where do you get the time for all your reading, Stone?" he asked.

The question seemed to embarrass the younger man.

"Snatches."

"By God, I wish I'd had your education!" Van Wyck stood up with his back to the fire. "I've had my education right in this room—since I built this house. I never went beyond the fourth grade in school. I've sat here night after night for fifteen years, reading. I pulled a bone in the club to-night—how in hell would I ever hear of Solon? I thought he was some new politician from Oklahoma."

"There's no one in the club with your experience and judgment."

"Maybe."

The irony in his voice was noticeable. What was success worth, anyway, if a man kept in his heart such a dim quarrel with existence? The whole thing, from youth to old age, was a rotten, unstable business—with nothing to tie to, nothing to rely on from start to finish except yourself.

Clewesbury was played out, too, so far as excitement was concerned. Neither Gibbs nor Morris—for all his fine clothes and Republican Club leadership—dared put anything over in Clewesbury now without the stamp of approval from the Van Wyck Building. Nor any of these blue-bloods of the club, either. Why, it made some such thing as United Clothing a necessity—if a man was to keep alive.

"It's only when we're secure that labor will strike," Van Wyck remarked absently. "They haven't anything to gain from these little concerns that fail as soon as the union gets established. I suppose we'll have a strike the day the first dividend is declared."

"Or before." There was something significant in Stone's glance. "But we'll be ready for that. I've got enough on Stillman and Fechter and every man Jack of their business-agents to swing public opinion against them. They've got radical records, those fellows. I've had two men on Fechter for a couple of months. He wrote a pamphlet in Wales about fifteen years ago that will stand quoting—regular fire-eating stuff. So far, there's no evidence of sexual irregularities, but we'll get that sooner or later, of course. The public gets one hint of free love and communism and they're done! A few thousand reprints of that pamphlet alone, sent to the newspapers to show them the ideas of the strikers, and we won't have to worry. We won't even have to call in any labor-spy detective agency."

IT was a little different kind of public opinion, however, that was engaging the attention of Forrester Stone as he drove off to the Pontiac Hotel.

No; it did no harm to rattle the dread skeleton of labor once in a while and trot out the power of the people. These capitalists liked to sink back and take it easy in a fool's paradise. But what sort of public opinion was there in Clewesbury about taking another man's wife out to lunch? No one cared in New York; no one knew it. But this city was probably different. Not on Congress Avenue, perhaps—society there seemed to have its usual disregard of bourgeois conventions. But was the town small enough to have it make any difference to business men? The chances were that Nancy Carpenter did not think much about it, or care. But it might make some difference to him.

And yet there were a thousand reasons to explain this affair. Just simply his relationship to her father surely was enough. And certainly no one could complain of a single *tête-à-tête* lunch at the Pontiac, in full view of the world. Who really cared what Clewesbury thought, anyhow?

She had on a different dress and dark furs, he noticed as he came into the lobby and she rose to greet him from one of the big upholstered chairs back by the Pompeian room. Did she dress according to mood or weather?

According to mood, he decided a few minutes later—she had a decidedly scornful tone in her voice to-day.

"I'm not used to such *tête-à-têtes*," he told her.

"Why, what do you do? Wander down a little, selfish moral path to success? With never any *tête-à-têtes*?" She sounded almost unpleasant.

"Would you prefer the path of folly?" he inquired, a trifle irritated.

"Just a little folly," she averred. "Wouldn't you—really?"

"Maybe," he said inscrutably. After all, there was no reason why he should reveal his ideas to her on such short acquaintance. She meant by "folly" probably only defiance of the rule of convention, of social observances in Clewesbury—mere youthful rebellion against anything that interfered with the pleasure at hand. She would be just as conventional as her grandmother, if occasion arose. And she had an exceptionally exasperating mood on to-day.

"I suppose you judge everything by your business, don't you?" she asked. "You wouldn't do anything that would interfere with that?"

"Depending on the reason," he replied, as evenly as he could. The shaft brought a little flush to his cheeks. That was his usual criterion, of course. But why should he allow her to insult him about it?

"You're like father," she remarked.

"Success comes high," he admitted. "It's a battle."

"I suppose it is," she assented, with a perceptible change of tone. "I suppose you have been fighting one long, continuous battle all your life."

"More or less," he admitted. It had been a battle, too, in that small Vermont town where he had started, and worked his way through college twenty years ago, and been editor of the town paper. It had been even more of a battle after he had his chance selling bonds, and had gradually by slow stages drifted into publicity work for the New England Southern, just fifteen years ago in Boston. And it was nothing but a battle now, since his big success had come to him with his Wall Street clients. "Mostly more," he added.

"And there hasn't ever been a fairy princess?"

"No," he said slowly.

"But—" she began, and stopped.

"But what?"

"But you must have known some girls?" she hinted.

"The usual amount," he admitted. "Summer girls, college, house-party girls, home-town girls—and New York girls."

"Tell me about the New York girls," she begged.

For a moment he felt silly. Tell her about his conquests, when he didn't have any! He had had no establishments up the Hudson with a wife out Long Island; no mistress in a West End Avenue apartment, either; not even any chorus-girl in his list! His amorous adventures, indeed, had come to an end once he had attained a certain amount of success. No man in New York attained the heights without incessant striving. Women were not worth it. They were like flowers in a florist's window—good only to enjoy for a brief instant, like this vivid creature before him. They were not part of the battle. Why was it they always wanted to hear about the other women a man had known?

"But there's nothing to tell," he said.

"Oh," she cried in her disappointment, "I don't believe it! I thought you would be so interesting—and there would be no reason why we couldn't tell each other things. And there were so many things I wanted to ask you about."

"But there's nothing to prevent that," he remonstrated. She was like some appealing child.

"Only there is," she pointed out complainingly. "You're a pig!"

"On the contrary—" he began.

But she would have none of it.

"Just a pig!" she cried hotly. "And I'm sorry *I came!*"

HE WATCHED her gather up her things in something like consternation. Why, one could not fight with young ladies in public! Was it possible his mere refusal could stir her so?

"Do sit down," he begged her.

"I won't," she retorted. It did no harm to pretend to be angry once in a while.

"But why not?" he asked, in something like bewilderment. He was not used to Nancy, of course.

"Because I'm not going to have luncheon with you now!" she cried.

"That's ridiculous," he said. "Sit down!"

He had risen, too, but she paid no attention to him.

"I'm going," she said.

"You're not! You're going to sit down," he said. He looked round their quiet corner, concealed from the *salon* by the palms and the high square pillar for just an instant. And then he made his decision. No one could see them.

"Sit down!" he said roughly. And he put both hands on her shoulders and returned her to her seat with almost unnecessary force. That was the way to deal with some girls.

"Oh!" she said. Her eyes were like storm-clouds.

"But wait just an instant, my dear girl," he said. She was fixing her hat with little, hurried motions. "I didn't mean to insult you or be unpleasant—or anything——"

"Your idea of politeness, I suppose," she retorted, looking straight at him.

"I simply meant that I had nothing exciting to tell—nothing you would call unusual or wildly tragic. Just reflect on that for a second."

"Oh!" she said.

"That's all I meant," he said earnestly.

"But there's been a reason, of course?" she queried suddenly.

"Well, I haven't known many New York girls—" he began. "But I've been acquainted with a good many as they came out each year, and——"

"And?" she prompted him.

Well, he told her then.

Power and ambitions, and reasons and all. The sweep of a ruthless and brilliant existence, with emotion tightly held in check, and far in the background dim youth and a loneliness that came in the night. A man of destiny, in his own estimation, this influencer of public opinion. And destined some day to be the Bismarck behind Wall Street and Washington. That was what he told her, although he hardly realized it at the time.

It was an exciting and highly satisfactory affair, too, that luncheon, Nancy told the cat when she came home about four o'clock, a tiny flush on her cheeks, and rumpled the roughly awakened, indignant feline on the divan. They had had a scrumptious quarrel, and after that he had been as docile as could be. There was something very different about him, too, compared with the youths of the Georgian. And he had told her all about himself. He had even broken an engagement somewhere in order to bring her down here.

THIS was the beginning of her affair with Forrester Stone—that affair which progressed rather harmlessly all through November while the dead flies in Moynihan's windows spoke mournfully of autumn on Kerrigan Street and the leaves out Congress Avenue fell from the trees with a gentle swish on the wet pavements at night. A slightly speculative look in Andrew Van Wyck's eyes, perhaps, as he remarked on her unfailing attendance at luncheon or down-town; a dim idea in David's mind that she seemed to be enjoying herself a little more than usual, and a slightly irritating suspicion on Breck Addams' part that she was not always listening any more when he held forth before the wood fire.

But that was the only result worth mentioning, if we except Aunt Hat. That lady set forth her opinion with a vigor that stunned her mild sister.

"What she needs is a thrashing!"

"Why, Hat!" her sister exclaimed.

But Harriet Carpenter was in no mood to be smoothed.

"Don't 'why Hat' me," she retorted. "I'm not a fool."

"But I'm sure that Nancy is perfectly happy."

"All the worse, then," Hat retorted. "I saw her again at the Century Club this noon with that smart Aleck, Breck, this time. He knew what I thought, too, for all of his impudent wink! It's the third man this week that I've seen her with—counting that black-haired Stone from New York. What kind of marriage do you call that?"

"But she'd never leave David for either of them."

"Not if she can make a fool of them all!" Hat retorted. "But do you think that looks as if she were entranced with her husband? He better quit thinking of dagoes and pay some attention to his wife!"

And yet for Nancy, I think, the affair was only mischievous adventure then. No one could tell what a man like Forrester Stone would do, of course, once he was finally humbled and completely enthralled. He might do all kinds of things—dramatic, exciting, blood-curdling. But, still, that only made the affair all the more thrilling, did it not? It would not be any fun if the humbling were to be tame and prosaic—as if he were to say "Oh!" and go away. There ought to be all the trappings of drama. Of course there was the danger of fire—for him. But that did not imply that there was any danger of fire for her as well—that was foolish. She was married.

That was as far as she had gotten, in those midwinter evenings, when the rehearsals for "Egypt" were under way—the great frolic of youthful society in Clewesbury, those yearly performances in the Lyric Theatre for the General Hospital Fund. In the apartment, Kitty Sassoon and Breck Addams and Kenny Watson waxed eloquent about them as soon as January was over.

"Aw, come on, Dave; make a fool of yourself just once more—I mean in public," Breck insisted before the wood fire on Kerrigan Street.

"Do take a part, even if it's just a tiny one," Kitty urged.

"No one has ever forgotten your polar bear," Kenny Watson pointed out.

"Nan has got to be in it, anyway," Breck reminded him. "She's our best little Cleopatra—the show this year is 'Egypt.' "

"If I only saw how I could," David regretted.

And in the end David capitulated.

"All right," he agreed finally. "Put us down for the thing. Give me a boatman's part, or something like that—and let Nan carry the family to fame."

It was Nancy who told Stone about it a few days later.

"I'm going to be Cleopatra," she said gaily. "It's our last year, I suppose. The débutantes will try to run it next year. Why don't you be something—a camel-driver or something—that won't take much time but will give you the fun?"

"I don't know," he said quizzically. "What's David going to do?"

"Have a small part," she replied. "Though you know how he is—he never comes."

It was an odd glance that Stone gave her at that.

"Why, I think I will," he said. "There's no use being an outsider here forever."

Why shouldn't he go the whole way, indeed, if he expected to get any real fun out of the affair? If he expected to enjoy himself in Clewesbury—these amateur theatricals always afforded so many chances for *tête-à-têtes*, too!

They were gay little parties that Nancy introduced him to—those rehearsals at the Edmunds' and the Osbornes', where they watched their acquaintances and friends make themselves pleasantly ridiculous, and then went down to the Pontiac or the Georgian or even the Chinese Pagoda for a little supper to top off the evening. A distinct kind of flair for Nancy, somehow, in thus flinging Forrester Stone headlong at her friends—and seeing if any of them could take him away! A little flutter of excitement in her heart, too, whenever she thought of his apparent subjection. There was certainly no indifference in his eyes when he talked to her or watched her trying to enslave, as per stage directions, Doug Everdell in the Edmunds' library. His eyes held a very different expression from that cold glance he had kept fastened on his old "Europe Since 1815" in the dim, light-dappled library on Morpeth Terrace. Was she really capturing him?

Ah, if only he had had Doug Everdell's part!

THAT thought sent a ripple of excitement down her spine all through that week just before the two performances at the Lyric. She might arrange to practise some of that rôle on him, and see if he could stand it. That would give her an excellent chance to enthrall him without giving herself away at all, without laying herself open to criticism.

"Though I think my costume is terrible," she confided to Kitty in the seclusion of that young lady's boudoir.

"There isn't enough of it for that." Kitty smiled.

"I know it," she retorted. "Do you think I'll be arrested?"

"Why, it isn't much different from some of the new dresses," Kitty said at once.

"Except that it—lacks," lamented Nancy.

"It does lack," Kitty admitted.

She appealed to David, too, that evening before dinner in the apartment.

"They've come home," she told him. "And one of them I simply can't wear—I'll show you."

He inspected her a few moments later.

"You can't wear the gold-armor one, anyhow," he said emphatically. "You might as well come out in a dinner-set."

"That's what I think," she said.

"Though the others are all right—they're fine."

"I'll get some other kind of armor," she said thoughtfully.

"Though don't go by me," David pointed out cheerfully. "The girls are the best judges—the other people in the show. Ask them."

She held the doubtful costume in her hand after dinner, after he had gone to the hospital, inspecting, with a kind of regret, the soft Nile green of the skirt and the flashing inlay of the breast-plates. It was beautiful—more beautiful than the others. The kind of dress Cleopatra must have worn in her youthful, slender days! She held it up on her shoulders before the cheval-glass in her bedroom after David had gone. Couldn't it be fixed somehow?

She slipped out of her clothes then, and tried on the other two. They were good, very effective theatrically, no doubt—but not like this one! She tried it on once more over the dainty underpinning that went with it, and admired the effect in the long mirror. Why, the effect with the gold headpiece and the tiny golden breast-plates over the peacock-feather bodice made her look exactly like some youthful Egyptian courtesan. It was really wonderful!

SHE almost started at the sound of the door-bell, and then put on her fur coat hurriedly and went lightly to the door, holding the high collar about her. Kerrigan Street might stare.

But it was Forrester Stone that she saw.

"Oh!" she said. "Come in. I'm not quite ready. My three costumes came, and I've been trying them on."

He put down his hat and took off his heavy coat carefully.

"That so?" he remarked. "How are they?"

"Why, two of them are fine," she said hesitatingly. "I've—I've just been looking over the other one again—it seems—well——"

"Not quite right?" he queried.

"I've got it on," she said, with a curious trace of embarrassment.

"Oh!" he said. "Let's see it!"

For an instant she hesitated—and then his nonchalant, cool tone decided her and she slipped off the fur coat and flung it on the divan.

"By Jove!" he said. "It's—it's wonderful!"

There was a curious tremble in his voice.

"Do you think it's—all right?" she inquired.

"You mean daring?" he said.

"Yes," she nodded.

"Well, it's that, all righ

the coolness seemed to hav

completely.

She stood quite still for a

ing in a distant mirror just her

gold-and-white beauty. And en she went toward him.

"Don't you think I make a real Cleopatra?" she asked, with a little sweep of her arms. "Don't you envy Doug?"

"Not when Phyllis gets him back of the wings," he laughed.

But his hands were quite tense, Nancy noticed.

"I don't know whether to feel silly or not when I do the allurement thing."

"Why?" he asked.

"Why, I don't know whether some one is going to say, 'Put her out!' or not."

"I don't think any one will say that," he replied a little hoarsely.

"You think they will—like it?" she queried.

It was all she could do not to touch him then with the little fan she held. All the emotional abandon of her seemed to hold her in thrall at the moment, pushing her on to conquest. But in Forrester Stone something seemed to snap. Yes; she was dressed as she should be now—a courtesan! That was what she had been from the moment he had met her. It was unmistakable now.

"By God," he said, "you are exquisite!"

And he seized her in his arms, peacock feathers, crown and all.

"Forrester!" she cried. "Let me go! What are you thinking of?"

But he had done it at last, he was triumphantly thinking. He had done it—and she would not be able to stop him.

He did not even seem to hear her.

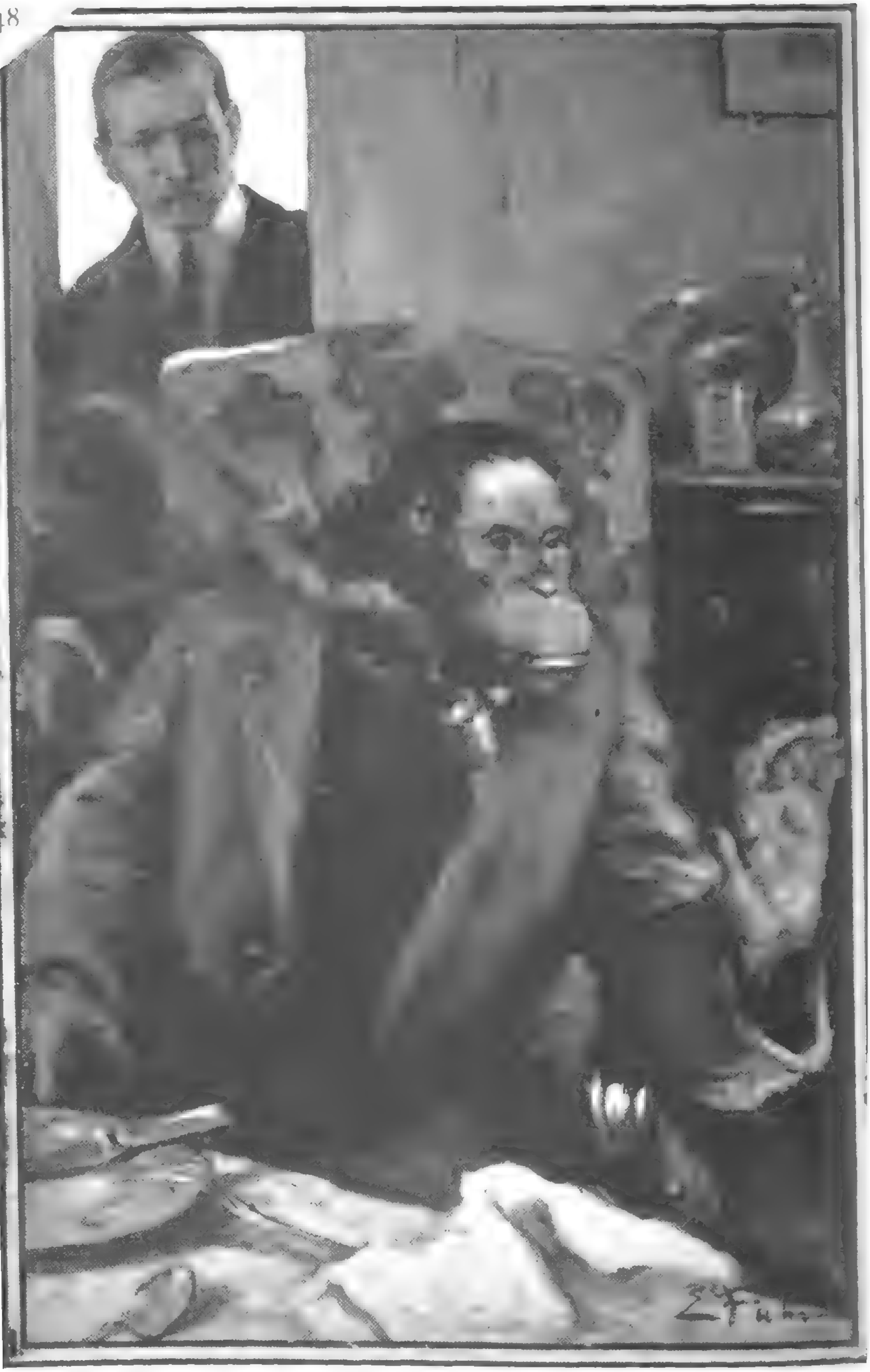
"I'm going to kiss you," he said. And he bent over her. She never forgot the stunning surprise of it.

For an instant she wished for a dagger. And then she felt rather faint.

"You're crazy!" she said abruptly, as she struggled loose. "Let me go!"

"Not until I've kissed you," he said. And he did not release her until he had kissed her and she had torn herself away and slammed the door of her bedroom.

Would a man of Forrester Stone's type abandon his pursuit of Nancy, or has she gotten herself into a difficult situation? See the next instalment in August EVERYBODY'S—out July 15th.



As Purchase stared, Siak held out a black paw to the warmth, and the red flicker was visible between the webbed fingers.

The Ladder *in the* Jungle

A Terrifying Experience for the Visitor, an Interesting Experiment by the Host Who Sought to Show That Animals—an Ape, for Instance—Can Be Taught to Think

By Alan Sullivan

Author of "The Spirit of the Beast," etc.

Illustration by Ernest Fuhr

AS PURCHASE read this letter, his mind traveled back over a space of thirty years.

> MY DEAR PURCHASE:
>
> We have not met for some thirty years, but for the last twenty I have been picking up and enjoying your books in out-of-the-way corners of the world. You are, in consequence, much more real to me than I can possibly be to you, but I hope that school-days are not yet quite obliterated and that you can spend a week or so with me during the present month.
>
> This is a somewhat isolated place for England. When you see it, you will realize why I chose it, and for my present activity it is ideal. I cannot offer you any standard hospitality. This is a bachelor's abode and I do all the work myself; but what I can promise is a glimpse into a world at which the greatest of your author tribe have only guesses. Will you not come?
>
> Faithfully yours,
> GIDEON TRENT.
>
> N. B. If you can come, send me a wire to Raven Hill station. It is best that I should take you to New Lodge myself.
>
> New Lodge, Raven Hill,
> Cumberland.

He saw young Trent, a new boy at the Willoughby School, staring after his disappearing mother with the strangest of expressions on his dark, square face. It was as though he had just made up his mind that this woman with the tear-stained cheeks would be no further use to him in life, and he did not purpose worrying about it. Then he turned and regarded his surroundings like a cub ready to fight on the slightest provocation. His eyes took in Purchase and traveled on, but in their swift inspection had been something that suggested that while the newcomer was prepared for battle, he also stood prepared to make temporary peace. And peace, it happened, was made.

Purchase had left Willoughby a year later, but carried away an ineffaceable impression of young Trent that even now was sharply distinct. He saw him as a diminutive gladiator, forging indomitably through school-life with his shoulders squared, his jaw thrust out and a lurking gleam in his black eyes. It was Trent's method of playing football that remained most prominently in Purchase's mind. Not overly fast on his feet, he pursued the ball like a questing bloodhound. When another boy intervened, it was only to take the consequences. When he tackled, it was with a grim and deadly ferocity that betrayed itself not only in his face but also in uncouthness of attitude, in the curving grip of the long arms and the way in which he lifted his undefeated head and short, powerful body above his prostrate rival. The trouble with Trent's football was that he played it too hard, too savagely.

This and a good deal more having passed through Purchase's mind, he became conscious of a sudden curiosity to see into what manner of man the boy had developed. That Trent should offer him a glimpse into a new world of romance seemed more inviting than if the invitation had come from almost any one else, and it intrigued him to know just what romance might mean to this black-browed friend of his youth. Without further thought he wired a reply, naming a day of the following week.

Trent was on the platform when the train drew in. He came up not as one ordinarily would after thirty years of oblivion, barked a gruff welcome, picked up his visitor's bag as though it were a toy and led the way to a small car. Then he laid his long arms on the wheel.

"We've seven miles to go, and a rotten road. Good of you to come."

Purchase said the usual thing, but said it with an effort. There was a sense of unreality about the whole performance. It was ridiculous, for instance, to notice the length of Trent's arms, but now it came back that at school the boy hardly needed to stoop to pick things up; and that was the case with the bag a moment before.

"Been in England ever since?" Trent was driving just as he had once played football, oblivious of ruts, holes and stones.

"Yes, mostly; with occasional trips to France and Italy. And you?"

"South of the equator for the last twenty years. I found your books almost everywhere I went. Queer to be back in England now, but I had to come."

"Work?"

"Yes—of a sort."

Trent shot this out with a little puffing of his large, smooth upper lip, which was fringed by coarse, straggling black hairs. There was something in the tone suggesting that Purchase might not think it work when he knew about it; then the arches of his brows went up, as though from some new and secret thought.

"What I'm going to show you is not for publication—understand. I've been banging away at it for so long that when the door opens, as it shortly will, I'm the first to go through. But you can use it indirectly, being a writer chap."

The desolation of the country through which he was forcing his car, his unconsciousness of any discomfort on this wreck of a road, the physical strangeness of the man and, above all, the latent mysteriousness in manner and voice impressed Purchase with a certain breathless significance.

"What is your work? he asked jerkily.

Trent grunted.

"I'm trying to link up three of the ologies in a definite direction—bio, physio and psycho. I tackled it first on paper, but gave that up. Concrete demonstration is the only thing."

Purchase began to wonder if his companion were a little mad.

"Bit of a contract, isn't it?" he ventured.

"Perhaps—but I think I can pull it off while you're here. Reason I asked you," he went on placidly, "is that I wanted some one who would carry me back to the days when all things seemed possible. I've got to have a witness, and I didn't want some scientist whose mind was frozen stiff with his own theories. You'll do, because your brain is flexible and you've got imagination. That's what it all starts with."

Trent delivered himself of this, relaxed his short, muscular body and settled back with an air that proclaimed the matter closed for the immediate present. The feeling of unnatural fascination closed more strongly round the other man. He noted that the length of Trent's arms carried his elbow to the middle of the wheel, over the front rim of which curved his hairy fingers. His knees, too, were far apart, so that only the outer edge of his feet rested on the pedals. As he sat, his back was rounded and his chest flat, and it struck Purchase that he was curiously out of proportion. It moved in the latter's mind that Trent was reminiscent of something, but what it was he could not determine.

NEW LODGE, which was practically invisible till they were close upon it, proved to be a small stone-walled, stone-roofed house, set in the middle of a straggling orchard. It lay in a wrinkle of the hills, and commanded a view inexpressibly dreary.

Inside, the place seemed comfortable enough—a narrow paneled hall, on either hand dining- and living-rooms, at the back a kitchen. Trent disappeared up-stairs with the bag, remarking over his shoulder that they would have the drink before anything else. A second later, Purchase heard a lock click gently in the upper hall, and Trent descended with an inscrutable smile on his dark face. He jerked his chin at the living-room.

"I'll bring it in there."

It was while the clink of glass sounded a few feet away that the older man perceived an odor of which he had been conscious for the last few moments. It was that of life—but not human life. Not of dogs or cattle, it spread with a faint, elusive acridness that made the hair prickle on his head. He could not trace it to any part of the room or article of furniture, but it penetrated everywhere, like an impalpable vapor freighted with a strangely savage import. He was racking his brain to recall when and where he had found it before when Trent came in with the glasses. His hand shook a little as he put them down.

"Seems queer to be talking to you again after so long," he said, pouring himself half a tumbler of liquor. "You were no end of a dog at Willoughby when I came as a new chum. I suppose I should have been more respectful, eh?"

"I don't think that mattered. You didn't stay long."

"No; only a year after you. They chucked me out of the football team. I couldn't stand that and left."

"Why?"

"Said I was too rough, and that I nearly killed a chap when we were playing Rossal. Damned rot!"

Purchase smiled, but with no surprise. "And then?"

"A long story. I decided I wanted to do the kind of thing that hadn't been done before, if I could find it. So I started looking. That took me to Africa, and from that east—always east. Could never stand going west. Did Madagascar, then India and so on through the Malay country and finished up in Borneo last year. At least," he added, with a touch of defiance, "I think I've finished. I'll know this week."

Purchase had a sudden impulse to ask the obvious question; then, just as suddenly, checked himself. The man was under the stress of some profound emotion. He had a plan, scheme, system, call it what one might, which his whole conscious existence was bent on following. To interrupt it—to throw this secret process out of gear—was to dabble with the unknown and possibly bring about disastrous results.

"I've been sorry for you fellows in England ever since I got back. You're alive, but you don't know what life really is. One must go to the jungle for that. There you get life by the millions—walking, crawling, flying and climbing—new life pushing down old life, as though it were a race up some monstrous jungle step-ladder. Ever see anything like that?"

Purchase shook his head.

"I thought not; it doesn't show in your writing. Anyway, I got the idea I'd like to give the life that was nearest the top of the step-ladder a lift just a little higher if I could. That's what I've been working on."

"Animals?" ventured Purchase.

"No; at least they're not animals to me. Now I'm going to get some dinner ready. See you in half an hour. Your room is the second on the left up-stairs—the left as you reach the top."

Purchase went slowly up. On the small landing he halted and glanced back. His host was standing motionless, his head forward and on one side, as though he were listening intently. The other man's breath came a trifle faster. In the top hall the strange odor seemed stronger, but, again, there was no sound. He crossed the floor without noise, gripped the handle of his door and, after an instant's pause, flung it quickly open. A moment later he was leaning out of the window and gulping in fresh air, while little tremors ran pulsing through his body. What had Trent been listening for?

HE WENT down-stairs a half-hour later, called by a shout from the dining-room, and in another ten minutes felt more at ease. But if Trent knew how to cook, he took little interest in his own efforts. Toward the end of the meal, which, for him, consisted largely of whisky and water, he pushed back his chair and sent Purchase an extraordinary glance that suggested both apprehension and unnatural mirth.

"I was talking about that jungle step-ladder. Well, I sat on the top of it for several years—and reached down. During the last year or so I didn't have to reach so far. I suppose you can guess what the nearest thing was?"

"No," said Purchase, with returning discomfort.

"Anthropoids. I tell you they're the most amazing beings in the world. Ever notice that wistful look in their eyes?"

Purchase nodded. His lips were getting dry.

"You can't well miss it. It's because they want to *know;* and so I started to tell them." Trent leaned forward, and beneath their high supraorbital arches his black orbs took on an intense stare. "We both pulled, the anthropoids and I, and, by God, Purchase, I sometimes wondered whether I was coming down instead of them coming up—especially one of them. And now I'm going to show you something."

He smiled again, and went into the hall with a curious shuffling step. Purchase heard him on the stairs, then the click of a lock and a queer, throaty chuckle. At that, his blood turned cold. A moment later Trent returned. He was back in his chair and peering at the door when there sounded a smooth, sliding noise as of leather over polished wood. Simultaneously the stair creaked and there drifted in that strange odor, now sharper and more penetrating.

THE sound was now in the lower hall, then at the door. A suffocating breath, and Purchase, who sat as though frozen, was conscious of a presence. A mist gathered over his eyes, and when it cleared he saw the misshapen figure of a huge ape sitting at the table beside Trent. As in a dream, came Trent's voice:

"This chap was nearest the top of the ladder. He seemed to have more to offer, if you understand, than the rest; and it struck me that he plucked at the chance of intelligence as he would pluck fruit. This all happened to the west of Sungi-Kapajan in Borneo, and if you can imagine the two of us trying to work the thing out among the Nipa palms, you'll pretty nearly get it. Now watch him, and you'll see that he has achieved a definitely conscious existence that is animated by thought. Don't speak."

Purchase stared. The great brute was clad in a loose flannel jerkin that exaggerated the gross proportions of his body. In the center of his high forehead was a convex eminence. The eyes were half closed, the lower lids deeply wrinkled, and the long upper lip dotted sparsely with stiff black hairs. The mass of him, heavy-jowled, the powerful upper arm, the webbed fingers and rounded belly all merged into a creation at once abhorrent and threatening. Purchase shrank back.

"Good God!" he whispered. "Is this why you brought me here?"

Trent, it seemed, did not hear him.

"Look at that ear," he went on jerkily, "and the prominence on the inside of the helix—that's the fold running along the edge—and then look at my ear. Ever know that the hair on your arm runs up from the wrist and down from the shoulder? Well, it's the same with this fellow."

His voice rose as he talked into a ragged crescendo of excitement, while Purchase, stiff with fear, stared and stared at the half-human thing balanced ponderously on a small wooden chair. Its light-brown eyes were fixed on its master with a gaze that would have been expressionless were it not for the little points of flame that danced in the heavy-lidded iris. Its knees were far apart, just as Trent's had been when he rammed the car over a stony road two hours before; but, save for this, he betrayed none of the fever that it appeared was running more and more swiftly through Trent's veins. It struck Purchase that, in an extraordinary fashion, the ape was holding something in reserve. Then Trent, who regarded the creature not at all, lit his pipe. At that, the brute's broad projecting upper lip contracted into wrinkles and his nostrils began to twitch. He glanced furtively at Purchase, then resumed his scrutiny.

"I'm not an animal-trainer," went on Trent, "and haven't any standardized tricks to show you; but what I mean you to see is the process of thought where heretofore no thought is admitted to exist." He turned to the ape. "Siak!" he said sharply.

The beast leaned forward, and Purchase could not have moved to save his life.

"More fire!" Trent shot this out with a snapping inflection on the last word.

Siak stood up, his pendulous arms hanging loose below his knees, and shuffled to the grate. Unnamable wisdom was in his baggy face. Then, with so lightning a motion that Purchase's eye was baffled, he threw a dozen pieces of coal into the flames, sent a pleading look at Trent, regained his seat and subsided once more into that unwinking stare. In another moment he had begun to eat.

"Thing about that," said Trent complacently, "is that he hates fire, but has achieved a mental process that overcomes fear. To begin with, he was afraid of me; but now"—and here a curious note crept into the voice—"it's sometimes the other way round. What saves me is that he doesn't know it."

Purchase moistened his dry lips.

"Look here, Trent; this is a bit thick for me. I'm going to clear out," he said shakily.

Trent raised his black brows.

'How?"

THERE was a note of menace in his tones that seemed to reach the beast beside him, and Purchase found them both staring, man and ape. Beneath this threatening battery, his last courage wilted. Into his brain swept the appalling conviction that these two had, in some dumfounding fashion, begun to exchange personalities, that the ape was climbing in slow degree to the consciousness of the man, and the man, step by step, was descending to the brutish level of the thing he had found in a Borneo forest. Somewhere on that jungle step-ladder there was a point at which, for one unspeakable instant, the two would touch as they passed and merge into a nameless pair that were neither man nor ape but a malevolent and uncontrollable combination of the two. Trent did not know it; the ape did not know it, but Purchase knew it. And this was the thing he had come to witness!

"You can't stop me," he said desperately.

Trent smiled a little.

"Don't put it that way. Matter of fact, I couldn't—but *we* can. The setting is a bit odd—I admit that—but it's going to give you stuff to work with that's in a class by itself. You'll be the first person that Siak has ever lived with except me—that is, at all intimately—and I'd suggest that you don't pay any attention to him whatever, but just take him for granted, as I do. I know that you're furious about this now, but you'll be glad enough later on—if you have the imagination I seem to read into your stuff. And, by the way, you needn't be nervous at night."

Trent nodded an assurance that only increased the other man's fear, and the next hour was spent in front of the fire with the ape between them. Purchase relapsed into a silence, from which no attempt was made to rouse him, while he explored every possible avenue of escape. But Trent, it seemed, had spoken truth. What man, alone and unarmed, could face these two? At nine o'clock Trent stirred himself and made a signal to the ape.

"Bed, Siak!" he snapped.

The thing lurched out, walking on the horny edges of its feet and feeling with dry black hands at table, door and book-shelf as it went. There was a creaking on the stairs, with pauses which grew ominous, and Purchase had visions of what was there, balancing itself against the smooth rail. Presently came the sound of a closing door.

"I've never known him to enter any bedroom but his own," said Trent carelessly. "You look tired. We'd better turn in. Have another drink?"

Purchase shook his head. He was now quite definitely convinced that he had to deal with a madman whose brain was trembling on the border-land of something unspeakably hideous, and that whatever salvation he might discover, it must be camouflaged by maintaining a casual exterior that would give cause for no suspicions. He was living on the edge of the unknown, and a word, a look or a gesture at the wrong moment might spell destruction. If Trent could remain master for another few days, Purchase reckoned he could play the game.

He let himself into his room, breathless lest, for once, Siak should have made a mistake, and, after a hasty glance, locked the door with trembling fingers. Leaning out of the window, he gulped in the untainted air and nervously examined his surroundings. The orchard, in which grew perhaps a hundred thick and stunted trees, reached to the road, and was bounded by a low stone wall. The only outbuilding was a small shed. Beyond the orchard stretched the hills, soft and purple in the moonlight, but vacant of cover as the sky itself. Three miles away, he remembered, was a cluster of cottages, from which the untenanted road led on to the station. Involuntarily he leaned farther out and measured the distance to the ground. Came a short laugh from beneath a near-by tree, and Trent lounged into view. He stood, staring up, then, without a word, strolled back out of sight.

Purchase lay down, fully dressed, his ears strained to catch what he prayed he might not hear. He caught Trent's footstep as the latter came softly up-stairs an hour later, and the closing of his door. He struggled with weariness and a great reaction, and his lids were like lead when, it seemed years afterward, the faintest sound became audible. At that he was instantly awake.

Presently the floor creaked outside. By this time it was very dark, so dark that across the room his own door was barely discernible. He sat rigid, every nerve tense, then slid to the floor, and on tiptoe moved toward the white knob that shone with a faint distinctness in the gloom. As his fingers closed on it, he knew that simultaneously it was seized at the other end. In a spasm of fear his grip tightened convulsively, but the thing turned in his palm. In the seconds that ensued, he could have screamed aloud. The invisible hand twisted to right and left with a force that he was powerless to resist. The movement was slow, remorseless and regular. At times it seemed that the steel bolt must bend, and it was then that he heard a quick, impatient breathing that made his blood run cold. He visualized the brute in the dark—the dark of which he had no fear. Then, in a sudden passion, the great body was flung forward and the groaning door bulged. And at that Purchase shouted.

Instantly he was answered by a series of hoarse, grunting chuckles, and the complaining woodwork quivered under a fresh impact. The ape, it seemed, was now running at it from across the hall, his hairy body a prodigious battering-ram. It could only last a few seconds more, and Purchase was half-way to the window when he caught another sound, and the chuckling suddenly subsided into a huge whimpering whisper dominated by Trent's voice roaring out some incomprehensible jargon of command. Followed the sliding of horny feet on smooth wood, the banging of a door, and the jargon became muffled. Then everything faded out. When Purchase came to himself, he heard a rapping and Trent's voice assuring him that there would be no further disturbance.

"Better come down and have a drink," said the voice.

But nothing would have induced the visitor to unlock his door that night, and presently Trent moved off with that noise in his throat which already gave Purchase strange and breathless premonitions. The two, man and ape, seemed to have edged nearer each other that night.

THERE was but one thought in his mind when he came down-stairs next morning. Breakfast was laid, and Trent stood in front of the fire.

"Don't know what got into Siak last night," he began explosively. "Never did anything like that before, but, in a way, I know just how he felt."

Purchase stared at him.

"Do you?"

"Yes. I thought I tried to explain that end of it. He's picked up a good deal from me, and I suppose I've got a thing or two from him. Sort of exchange on the jungle step-ladder. Have some tea."

Purchase's hand was shaky, and it grew more unsteady when, a moment later, he noted that Trent's wrist was bandaged.

"No breakfast for you?"

The other man laughed, moved to the sideboard and drained a glass of whisky.

"Siak got me last night. I should have cauterized it."

Purchase felt suddenly sick.

"You don't want me here—really," he stammered. "I've seen enough to convince me that you've done something that's never been done before. Tell you what—I'll work it all up on paper and send it along for your suggestions." He sent Trent a quick, friendly glance. "I couldn't work here, and I'm only in your way."

Trent grunted and shook his head. His face was flushed, and tiny points of light moved in the dark eyes. When he spoke, it was as though he were deliberately working up to a passion. He stood massively, impervious to appeal.

"You stay where you are. I need you; we both need you. It's no use thinking—as you are this minute—that you'll skip out. In Siak's present condition, you're a good deal safer here than you would be meeting him, say, at the front gate. As to putting the thing on paper, you've got to feel it first—and you haven't begun yet. You've got to think of Siak as the nearest thing in God's world to humanity, feeling along the border-land between his world and yours, and every now and then sticking a paw across the line. He's getting used to the feel of it now, and presently will step bodily across. How long he'll stay, God only knows, but that's what you're going to see. Perhaps he'll be frightened and jump back. Perhaps he'll like it and find it not so different, after all. But perhaps"—and here Trent drew a long breath—"he'll get vexed. Vosmaer, Griffith, Gervais and Wallace—they've all done a bit, but not one of them has reached this point. You stay with me and I'll open your eyes. Have a drink."

Purchase licked his dry lips, and at that moment Siak shuffled in. The beast had discarded the flannel jerkin, displaying compressed and muscular thighs covered with brownish red hair, a tun-shaped body and long, tapering extremities. He squatted in front of the fire and stared at his master. Trent gave a gruff laugh.

"He's pulling, Purchase; he's pulling like hell. He wants to be alone on top of that ladder, where there's only room for one. Suppose he did get there—where would I be? My God, I never thought of that!"

Purchase pushed away his food. Trent was scowling at the brute, his face a mask of unhuman fear. Siak caught that and stared back till there passed between these two a tense and deadly defiance made ominous by the ape's heaving breast and the blood that mounted riotously to Trent's temples. Then, lest he should scream, Purchase stumbled up the stairs and locked himself in.

HOURS dragged on, but he dared not stir. At noon there was a shuffling at the door, and he knew that Siak was there; but instead of another assault, there sounded only the clink of china and a slow, stertorous breathing. The brute left the food on the floor and made his way down the creaking stairs. And not a sign from Trent.

Half-way through the afternoon there was noise below, broken by a strange gust of laughter, unnamably wild, human yet not human, savage yet inexpressibly mournful, as though humanity were taking leave of the recognizable world. It seemed that at last man and ape had met somewhere on the mysterious border-land, and the gulf between them was about to be attempted. By this time Purchase was reduced to a condition in which he had no body left, but only a capacity to register one hideous emotion after another. Then silence till evening.

On the edge of night, sudden uproar spread in the lower part of the house. Purchase heard voices and strange cries, then a running to the door and the struggling of heavy bodies, which suddenly ceased. This was followed by a stream of jumbled words maintaining a half-intelligible level as though they were both on top of the ladder for a terrific instant. Finally silence, in which the front door closed with a crash.

He grasped a poker and crept to the stairs. The dining-room door was open, and a whiff of tobacco reached him through the fetid odor to which he was already accustomed. Presently came the tinkle of china, and the short, dry chuckle that characterized Trent when he was amused. The row was apparently over—for the present.

Step by step Purchase worked his way to the hall. At the dining-room door he stood for a breathless moment, then peered in. Crouched in the big armchair, with Trent's tweed coat pulled over his shoulders and Trent's pipe between his yellow teeth, was Siak. As Purchase stared, he held out a black paw to the warmth, and the red flicker was visible between the webbed fingers. The coat was split in the back, and a ridge of tawny hair projected as he leaned forward. And at that the bones of Purchase turned to water. Siak was on top of the jungle step-ladder—and alone.

The man retreated with a singing in his ears. Stepping like a cat, he moved soundlessly along the hall, a speechless petition on his parted lips. The door stood ajar, and, outside, the gloom seemed to extend welcoming arms. Still on tiptoe, he stole down the narrow road.

Half-way to the gate his attention was diverted to something that stirred in a stunted tree overhead, and glancing swiftly up he discerned a pale gleam that resolved itself into a naked figure balanced between the branches. Simultaneously there began a chaotic gibbering. At that, the specter of horror took Purchase by the throat, and he sped into the night.

Everybody's Magazine, July, 1922

A Mystery Serial—The Strange Story of a Girl

SWALLOWED UP

Hope, Brought Back to Bristow's Sanatorium, Finds Herself in Great and Immediate Danger from Her Merciless Captors. However, Her Resources and Wit Do Not Desert Her

By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow

Illustrations by R. K. Ryland

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

IN THE hidden closet in Loring Ranger's old country house down on Long Island, George Kelsey woke up slowly, draggingly from his long, exhausted sleep and blinked his heavy eyes. The strange amnesia of utter weariness was still upon him, heightened, as it always is, by the unfamiliarity of one's surroundings. It was a torturing labor to answer the questions that beat in his brain. Where was he, and why?

Slowly, bit by bit, definite new sections of his memories came to life: His appointment as one of Bristow's doctors in the sanatorium; his discovery of the man's criminal practises; his own incarceration—as a lunatic! Clever, that had been—clever and plausible. Then the girl, and the discovery that she was the Hope Ranger whose disappearance had filled the papers for weeks, for whom the police of the nation had been looking, and for whose return incredible rewards had been offered. What better place to hide the victim of such a plot than a private asylum that stood as high as Bristow's?

Their flight, then—that wonderfully contrived escape. And what, somehow, they had come to understand during their wild rush in Bristow's car and their search for this hiding-place in the house Hope's father owned and she knew so well. He longed for her, for the touch of her hand, the sound of her voice. And suddenly terror cut in upon the gropings of his mind. She was to have wakened him. But she had let him sleep through the night. It was light now— But—light! And they had closed the panels, lain in darkness, for safety. Kelsey pulled himself up, fully awake at last. A figure stood in the open space made when the panel was slid back. Hope? No—a man!

He was on his feet in that narrow space with the sharp leap of an uncoiled spring.

"Hope!" The cry burst from him. It was at once a call to her and an expression of the consternation that struck through him.

Then he sprang. The man in the opening ducked, and raised one arm to shield himself.

"I'm a friend!" he cried, throwing himself against the side of the cupboard. "Honest; you can believe me. A friend of Ranger's."

Kelsey loomed above him, still threatening; but his lowering glance had shifted. What was this he was holding in his clenched hand—that bit of white paper sticking through his fingers?

Juarez Charlie had dodged, and, quick as a cat on his feet, stepped from the cupboard into the room.

"Come out and look around you," he invited. "Then you can see for yourself that there's no one here."

Kelsey hardly heard him. He had

Girl

UP

lerself
Cap-
t Her

'ssue.

nd. She was
she had le
It was light
y had close
, for safety.
lly awake at
a space made
ck. Hope

arrow space
ed spring
m him. It
a expression
ck through

he opening
shield him-

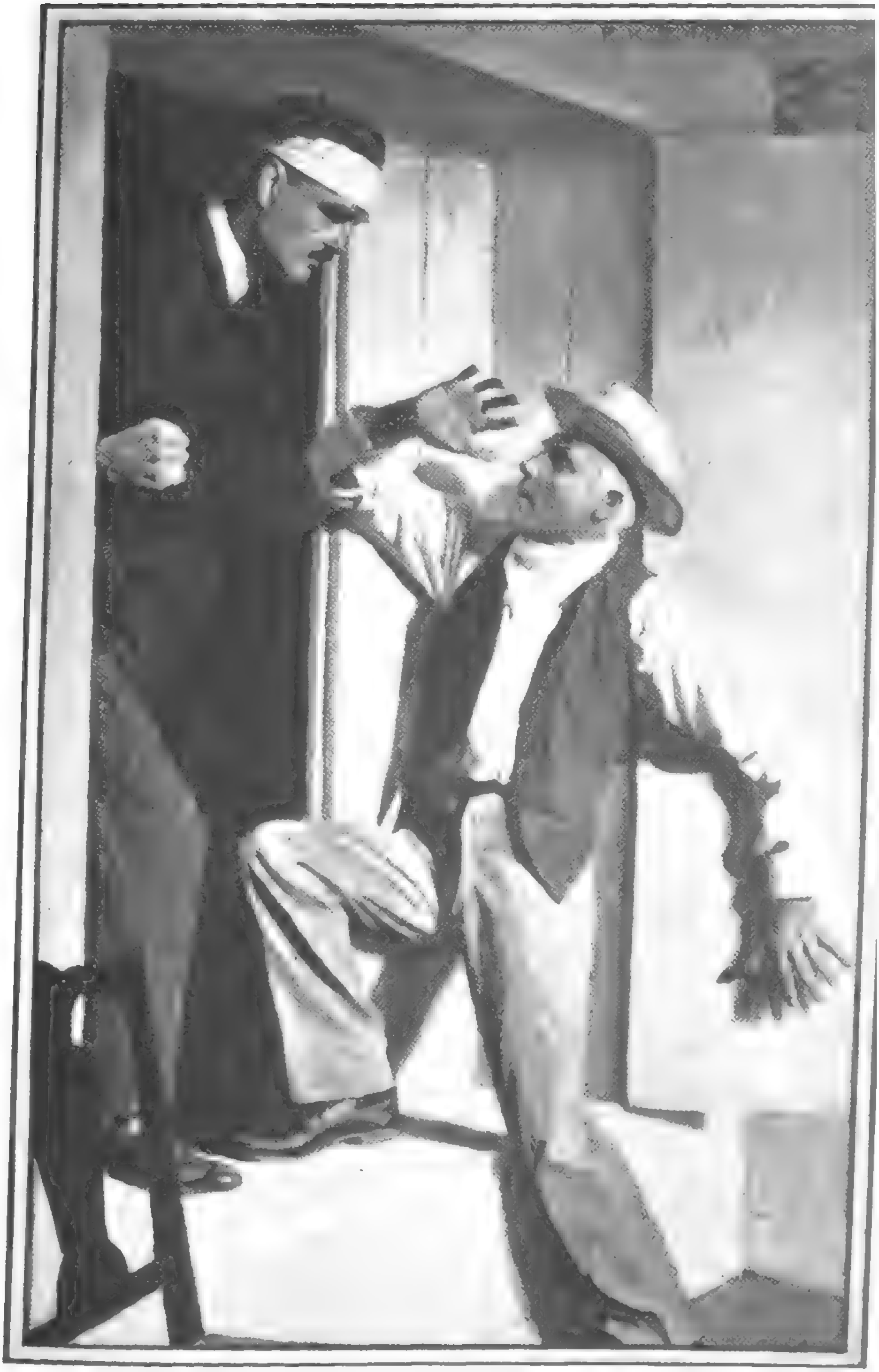
wing him-
cupboard
, friend of

threaten-
d shifted
clenched
sticking

quick as
cupboard

," he in-
self that

He had



The man in the opening ducked, and raised one arm to shield himself. "I'm a friend!" he cried. "Honest: you can believe me A friend of Ranger's." Kelsey loomed above him, still threatening.

unclosed his hand and was straightening out the paper. He could see that there was something written on it, but the light was too dim and gray for him to decipher it. He was in the room and at the window in two strides.

Here he read Hope's message. The rain was dashing against the window-panes, the wind wailing about the house. These were the only sounds. Kelsey stood stiff and motionless, his arms hanging lifelessly, his face the color of ashes and wretchedly haggard.

"And I slept through it! I slept while she gave herself up to save me!"

THERE was a deep wonder in his self-abasement. He could not believe that he had done this incredible thing. But he had. She was gone. Here was her note. Facts.

The uprushing blood darkened his face. He whirled savagely on Charlie.

"Who are you? One of their men? Did you help take her?"

"I did not." Charlie wriggled like an eel from that biting grasp and stood rubbing his shoulder. "I'm one of Ranger's men, Juarez Charlie. Do you get that? It's a name that means something among the boys that ride the plates and hang out in the jungles."

He swaggered, his hands in his trousers pockets, his head at its most impudent angle. But, nevertheless, he made Kelsey feel the serious purpose behind his gasconade. And Charlie recognized this and took advantage of it.

"Now, please can the melodrama. We've got to get down to brass tacks with a hammer. It's the grandest luck in the world that I came on you this morning. I've been wandering about with one-third of a picture-puzzle, trying to piece the rest out of the air. And you've got the other two-thirds. Holy smoke! Between us we can fit the whole thing together."

"And leave her there? I guess not! You don't know what they're capable of. Even now——"

Charlie reached the door ahead of him and spread his arms across it.

"I know just what they're capable of, son. Better than you do, maybe. But they can't do things in a minute. They know that I'm on their trail and that I've been in Barcelona. They think you're drowned."

"Drowned? Me?" Kelsey repeated. "In heaven's name, why?"

"She told them you'd made for the shore, and a boat. Then that terrific storm. Lord! Did you sleep through that?"

"I seem to have slept through everything but my own especial judgment-day. I'm going through that now."

"But still," Charlie continued, "there's always the chance of your being alive and at large. So, everything considered, they've got a new situation before them, something they haven't foreseen. They have to plan new moves, cover trails and provide bomb-proof alibis and excuses. That takes time. They can't manufacture a lot of new machinery and set it going all at once."

"But, my God, if you're what you say you are, one of Ranger's men, all you have to do is to go out now and telephone him and the authorities."

"Oh, is it?" Charlie retorted, with acrid sarcasm. "If you'd come down off your high horse and take the road at a jog-trot, we'd get along faster. This thing isn't quite as simple as it sounds. You start out to telephone, and you'll be nabbed sure. You can't force me to go till I'm ready. I've got to find out what you know first, and I'm going to tell you what I know. We'll have the whole scenario then, and can get out on location, ready to shoot.

"Oh"—seeing the unyielding stubborness of Kelsey's face—"I'm not asking your right eye or left leg—only ten minutes of your valuable time. Buck up, son, and believe that I know what I'm talking about. Here"—he held out his sack of tobacco and cigarette-papers—"calm your nerves. You'll want them on ice before we're through."

Half convinced, Kelsey gave way ungraciously, and, throwing himself in a chair, began to roll a cigarette with awkward, unsteady fingers.

"What sort of place is this sanatorium?" The brusk tang of the question gave Kelsey the feeling that Charlie was really heading somewhere and roused him from his melancholy abstraction.

"Bristow's?" He looked up. "One of the best in the country. Only for the very rich, of course—thoroughly modern, splendidly managed. Bristow is an alienist of the first rank, with a criminal twist and a craze for money."

"What were you doing there?"

Kelsey told him briefly of his position as assistant physician and the circumstances of his detention, of his first experience with Hope and of the rôle she was playing, of their subsequent meetings and the escape.

CHARLIE'S cigarette burned to ashes in his fingers as he listened, but he did not once interrupt the story or ask a question.

"Bristow!" He held up one of his lightning-rolled cigarettes, naming it. "But"—squinting thoughtfully as he laid it on the table—"he couldn't swing it alone. Too big. Who else is in it?"

He shot the question at Kelsey like a bullet from a rapid-fire revolver.

"Miss Copley. She's a nurse. Looks strikingly like Hope. Passes as an older sister in charge of the insane younger one."

Charlie pursed his mouth in a whistle.

"A ringer? Clever! Stops all questions that way."

He held up another cigarette and placed it beside the first.

"Copley! Any one else?"

"Higgins. An ex-alderman. An old millionaire. Made a fortune in Wall Street, they say."

Charlie bounded up with a stifled exclamation, his tongue clicking against his teeth.

"Hobo Bill! That does settle it! Hobo Bill! I might have known it. Hobo— The joker in the deck! Made a fortune in Wall Street!"—jeeringly. "Why, you baby child, in the good old days, Bill Higgins had a cut-in on every crooked deal turned below Fifty-ninth Street. Dips, strong-arms, wire-tappers, con-men, everybody. They all had to settle with him, and, believe me, he didn't take no short end. Plain hog. He resigned just before the Hooplaw graft investigation. Had to. Then he went abroad. I haven't heard of him for five years. Thought the old goofer had cashed in. Why, Thaddeus"—he brought his hand down on Kelsey's knee—"a bunch that was wised up to only one-tenth of what Hobo Bill could tell 'em wouldn't have to be hunting a gold mine. They could line up the crooks and live the life of Reilly."

He bobbed about the room like a cork, snapping his fingers, muttering broken phrases under his breath.

"The hobo messages! This booby-hatch for a headquarters! The nurse, a ringer! I've got the whole thing!"

A third cigarette rolled quicker than the eye could follow kept the other two company. He stopped by the table and held up the three, touching each as he checked them off.

"Bristow! Copley! Higgins! My boy"—his voice was solemn; his unreadable eyes glistened—"you've done what no one else ever could. You've found the Combine!"

Kelsey made a violent gesture.

"What difference does it make what I've found when we haven't found her? If you don't do something pretty quick, I will. I can't stand this any longer, sitting here talking, when it's easy to free her. They should be raiding the place now."

Charlie surveyed him with one of his most darkly contemptuous glances.

"Get the picture," he said roughly. "I go out and telephone to Ranger. He informs the police. The minute he does that, Higgins is tipped off. Oh, yes"—emphatically—"that will be all provided for. Every little thing's provided for, you can be sure of that. Ranger and his crowd of flatties go there. Bristow's surprised. Oh, very! He throws the place open to them. No girl. Nothing in the least suspicious. Don't ask me how. I only know that's the way things'll be. They'll come through clean. And you and me, laddie"—he blew scornfully into the air—"what about us? I'll appear in Ranger's eyes and every one else's as the wild goose that started a crazy chase that led nowhere. And you? Well, you'll be a dangerous lunatic in close confinement for the rest of your more than likely brief life. One slip on the ice and we're gone. We've got to work fast; I agree to that. But we've got to work right. One slip—just one—and we're over the precipice, and so is the girl. I'm telling you."

Seeing that he had at last made some impression on Kelsey, Charlie went on in a less severe tone:

"You think I'm a free agent, who can scout round as I please. Nothing to it. I'm not. When you hear what happened to me last night and this morning, you'll see. Then we can get down to our brass tacks and decide just where to nail them."

"All right. But make it short. Begin—begin!"

"Brevity is my middle name, Oswald. But see that you don't get restless again and make another dash for that noose that's waiting to be slipped round your neck."

Kelsey stirred irascibly, but made no retort; and Charlie, with a deliberation which his companion felt sure was to try him further, lighted the cigarette he had named "Bristow" and began the story of his adventures.

"IN THE first place," he said, "I've known Ranger ever since I was a boy, and when I heard about his little girl, I started out on my own to find her. I know crook psychology better than old Flynn ever did; but this gang that are holding her fooled me forty ways from the ace. No use saying I haven't made a mess of it so far, because I have. But last night I got a tip that led straight to Bristow's sanatorium.

"I rode as fast as my motor-cycle could race from Westchester to Barcelona, taking all the short cuts. It was on one of them that I came on you two. Lord"—Charlie gritted his teeth—"if I'd only dreamed!

"But I didn't. And so I rushed for a doctor, thinking you were ready to kick in; and as soon as I reached the village, I got pinched. I'll tell you the whys of that later."

Kelsey signified his approval of this consideration.

"Of course," Charlie explained, "I could have got out by telephoning to Ranger. But, for one thing, I didn't want to get in touch with him until I had gained the information I was after; and for another and perhaps more important reason, my brutal jailer wouldn't permit it. So I just turned in and went to sleep—that is, as much as that fierce storm would let me.

"But in the mean time my mascot had got busy. Gee! And again, gee! I've always looked on women as trouble-makers in an otherwise bright and care-free world. But this girl—she simply scatters luck-germs. She it was who gave me the lead to Bristow. I'd had dinner with her and put her back in a 'bus with her party. They all went on to spend the evening with some friends, and as they came back about midnight, they stopped at the Lone Hill garage for some gas. Up steps the garage-man's assistant, a shock-headed lunk, that had driven me and my queen to the inn. He was all excitement, and tells her that I've been arrested over here at Barcelona.

"Ah, Clarice and Mary Ann! What a head-piece that girl's got! She thinks quicker than unchained lightning. This is the way I figure out how she came to do what she did—the one perfectly right thing.

"Here's her friends kind of giggling at her for being took in. She don't believe that; for she saw me with Ranger. And Barcelona is the tip she gave me. But she wants to make sure. So what does she do but call up the man whose name's been in all the papers as Ranger's attorney, Eustace Higby.

"He tells her that I'm all right, and then he routs out Frank Bryan, Ranger's private secretary, and shoots him down here on the morning train to get me out. Talk about the great women of history! Boy, she's got 'em all left at the post."

Kelsey bore these laudations with what grace he could; but he looked harassed and weary.

"Now, this is where you sit up and listen." Charlie tapped Kelsey twice on the chest with a hortatory forefinger. "While I was eating breakfast, an unexpected caller dropped into the jail to see me, an old bird that I sized up for a doctor. I win. He is one, named Creamer, the original man who wandered all round Robin Hood's barn. When he talks, he starts to go north, shifts to sou'-sou'west, twists round to due east, and finally comes back to north again, giving you all the family history and every detail of village life since the first settlers in Sixteen hundred and something. But what I made out of it was that my man-eating constable had got word to him about your accident, and Creamer'd doddered off to the scene of disaster about three hours late.

"There he finds Bristow, who has recovered from a desperate attack made upon him by a homicidal maniac. That's you."

Kelsey looked it at the moment.

"I wish I'd killed him," he said, with profound sincerity.

"Worse mess for us if you had! Well, of course Creamer had to get all the gruesome facts, and then he remembered—he's Main Street's walking historical society—that this place, the old Rose house he called it, had some nook built into it where, in the cheery old times, the family used to hide when the Indians wanted to put a kick in their parties by having a friendly little massacre of the palefaces.

"That sets Bristow afire. He's all for finding it, when just then the girl turns up. No doubt but what she's been trailing round through the woods; her skirt and shoes were wet and muddy. She was sort of dazed and imbecile, but Bristow did get out of her that the man had made for the shore. Bristow had been thinking that way, anyhow, and she bolsters up his opinion.

"Creamer says you stole a boat and got off, and must have capsized in the storm. Several boats were found adrift this morning, two of them bottom up. Bristow still has his lines out for you, although there's hardly a chance that you could have been picked up."

"Good God!" Kelsey was shaking as if in a nervous chill. "Think what she did! Gave herself up, so I could go free. And I'm sitting here. Sitting here!" He sprang up, beating his hands together as he walked. "Why wasn't I awake to prevent her? Why——"

"Yes; and they'd have you both now. The girl showed sense. But I'm not done yet. Leave me resume. Creamer would be talking still if Frank Bryan hadn't blown in. Then, with a little careful shooing on my part, the old bozo reluctantly took his leave.

"Bryan explained how he happened to be there—which made me say my prayers to little Goldilocks—and tells me that he has arranged for my release as soon as Tom Simonds can get his Westchester brother on the wire and have the charge withdrawn.

"No"—as Kelsey looked at him inquiringly—"I can see you don't know what I'm talking about. But that's not important just now; Bryan is.

"The minute that Frank came in I saw that he was in bad shape. He's a cold fish, and I couldn't flatter myself that he had worried to skin and bones overnight about my fix. I'd been nursing a hunch about him for some time, though, and this looked like a moment to put the screws on him. It worked. I'd hardly started in before he broke down; and when an efficiency-machine of a man goes to pieces, he scatters bolts and cogs and what-not all over the place.

"There he sat, shaking and crying, calling himself bad names and muttering about suicide.

"I told him that was all right; go to it. But, first, to tell me what he knew. Little by little I got it out of him." Charlie's thin mouth clamped. "Kelsey, he was in on that damned abduction."

"WHAT?" Kelsey cried. "Mr. Ranger's private secretary?"

"Yes; just that. Yet Frank's not bad, nor is he particularly weak, either. Oh, stop glaring at me, Kelsey, as if I was an accessory after the fact. I am, and not ashamed of it. I've lived too hard and long to curse a brother for his sins. Frank was caught with all four feet in a trap. He's the good young man with the bad younger brother.

"The Combine—that's the gang that's got Hope—needed him; so they framed the brother, which wasn't hard to do, as the goods on him were there to get. Then they closed down on Frank. He was told that all they wanted was fifty thousand dollars, which Ranger would never miss, and the girl would be held in comfort until it was paid. If Frank didn't care to assist, brother would go to Sing Sing for thirty or forty years. Frank caved. Some dope was slipped into Hope's sundae while she and every one else in that fruit-shop was watching a row they'd staged in front of the cashier's desk.

"And when she walked out, the drug was beginning to work. She was growing groggy and, naturally, when Bryan came forward, she let him help her into the limousine at the curb. Frank hated it, but he thought it would be all over in a week or two and no one any the worse. Then, when he realized how he'd been played, he was hog-tied. He'd just about reached the breaking-point when Higby sent him down to Barcelona and me."

"But I still don't see." Kelsey had followed every word, his brow growing more furrowed as Charlie went on. "How could they know that she would go into that shop and order the sundae?"

"They didn't. But a big thing like that wasn't pulled off in a hurry. They had an inside man, Bryan says, named Fitch, whose business it was to find out about Hope's movements and tip them off when she was to be out alone. Then they were ready to spring any one of half a dozen schemes, whichever was the best under the circumstances.

Everybody's Magazine, July, 1922

"Well, to go back, I told Frank about the escape, and them getting her again; and he said it was funny, if the girl really was Hope, that she didn't make for the hiding-place in the old house instead of taking to the woods. I got keyed up then, and he tells me all about it. Ranger had showed it to him once, when they were down here together. Then he falls to moaning and sobbing again, and I tell him that I am going to get the girl, but I don't want Ranger in on it yet, and if he'll keep his mouth shut about what he knows, I'll padlock mine about him. Silence for silence.

"He weeps some more, and tries to kiss my hand or something; and just then Simon Legree breezes in and unwillingly releases me."

Charlie, having finished the "Bristow" and "Copley" cigarettes, began on "Higgins," picking up his story again, heedless of the fuming Kelsey.

"Just as we were stepping out into the blessed sunlight of freedom—only it was raining—my eye fell on a high board fence across the street from the hoosegow; and there, life-sized and prominent, a glad message of 'Welcome to Our City' stares back at me. It's chalked up in hobo language; and let me tell you that he who read was very apt to run. It said: 'Beat it for the Far West at once or you'll have your throat slit!'

"There was a nice little knot of onlookers there, waiting to see the prisoner shake off his chains, and I knew the Combine would have some innocent bystander on hand to make sure I got the friendly word. So I fell over against Bryan, acting scared to death, and a minute later told Simonds that he wouldn't see me again in these parts, as I was off for sunny California and intended to stay there.

"Then I went with Bryan to the train, checked my motor-cycle to New York, rode up the line for three stations, hopped a freight back again, dropped off, and, making my way through these rain-soaked woods, sneaked into the house.

"And now we've got the whole thing." He tossed the butt of his "Higgins" cigarette into the fireplace. "You see, don't you, why I can't lope into the village and summon Ranger?"

"Ye-es," Kelsey conceded. "But——"

"Stop talking," said Charlie shortly, "and let me think. Look here, Kelsey; is there one human soul in that hospital you can trust, or think you can?"

Kelsey reflected.

"Morton," he said, "the house physician. I could trust him if we were ever able to convince him that Bristow is crooked."

"We've got to get him here, then, without his knowing who we are, and I'll undertake to convince him. You see, we must have some one inside the place who'll find out for us what they're planning. Think hard, Kelsey. What will bring him here? Some girl he is interested in?"

Kelsey dismissed this, palms down.

"That wouldn't bring him; science is all he cares for. Wait a minute!" A light flashed over his face. "I helped him write a letter to one of the medical journals, rebutting the statements in an article by a Dr. Jonas Crayshaw. He was tremendously worked up about it. Why couldn't we get word to him that Dr. Crayshaw is down here writing an answer and would like to have a talk with him?"

"GREAT!" Charlie thumped Kelsey between the shoulders. "I'll take a chance and sneak out to the nearest farmhouse and telephone him in the character of Dr. Crayshaw, asking him not to mention my presence here to any one, as I am working against time and must have the strictest seclusion."

"But it's dangerous for you to show yourself round here," Kelsey said.

"I'll show just as little of myself as possible, believe me," Charlie answered. "And if I don't come back, you'd better just lie low here until night and then try to reach Ranger." He paused and ran his hands through his hair. "I don't know but what I'd better call up Lorry, after all." He wavered. "We've got to have money. Morton may need it in the hospital to buy a spy or so. Lord, I hate it! Lorry might queer everything."

Kelsey gave a little jump, and smiled for the first time.

"Don't let the lack of funds worry you," he said, and drew from his pocket the package of bonds, spreading them on the table.

"A hundred thousand dollars!" Charlie gaped at them. "Jumping Jehoshaphat! Why, it's Ranger's ransom-money! Where did you get it?"

Kelsey told him, Charlie jigging the while and cutting fantastic pigeon-wings.

"Heeled! Heeled like princes!" he chuckled. "Oil to smooth our way!"

He took up his hat with great dignity.

"Dr. Morton, this is Dr. Crayshaw speaking"—in deep, rich tones.

Juarez Charlie again, he folded a ten-thousand-dollar bond and placed it in his pocket.

"I may have to do some buying-up myself outside, if I see them before I'm sniped. So long, my prince of Finance!"

He vanished through the door.

WHEN Hope drove back through the hospital grounds and walked between two men up the steps, down which she had flown a few hours before, palpitating with her splendid dreams of freedom, she was hardly conscious of the ignominious contrast.

Her ears were straining for the sound of a motor behind her, the car which would bring Kelsey.

But the night stillness was broken only by the rustling of trees in the wind which had risen and was blowing the fog before it and the constant, increasing mutter of thunder.

Anita Copley met her in the hall, and in that full dazzle of light surveyed her gloatingly—a cruel, sweeping glance that took in the girl from head to foot. Then she peered past her through the open door.

"Where's the man?" she asked one of the guards.

"They haven't found him yet. He made for the shore."

Her mouth pinched. She was showing the effects of the night's strain. There was a bluish tint in the pallor of her face.

She asked no more questions, but, dismissing the two men, caught Hope by the arm and led her up-stairs to her room, thrusting her in through the door before her.

Hope tottered to a chair and fell into it. With an instinctive impulse to strengthen by every act her story of wandering through the woods with Kelsey, she was feigning a weariness greater than she felt. Her head dropped against the back of the chair; she closed her eyes.

Anita knelt before her and tore off her shoes. Carrying them over to the light, she examined them minutely. They were wet and encrusted with sand. Then, bending over the inert girl, she unfastened her skirt and drew it off. She gave it the same close inspection, holding it up to the light. Its bedraggled condition seemed to satisfy her.

There was a white flash of lightning, a jarring burst of thunder, and Hope, startled, opened her eyes.

"Come; get undressed!" Anita ordered.

Hope twisted petulantly and let her head fall back again. But Miss Copley caught her by the wrist and jerked her to her feet. Whimpering, Hope rubbed her arm.

"So dark in the woods!" she sighed. "We walked and walked and ran and ran."

"Where did he go, pet?" asked Anita in tender tones, pressing Hope into a small chair and beginning to take down her hair with gentle fingers. "He's a bad man to go and leave you." Anita was all indignant sympathy.

"I knew the way," Hope said resentfully. "I knew everything back there. But he pulled me along and wouldn't listen. I got away"—proudly—"I wouldn't go to the water."

"You're mighty bright to-night," Anita muttered under her breath. Aloud, she asked, in soft surprise,

"And he wanted you to go down to that black, cold water?"

Hope stared at her own image in the glass and drooped against the side of the dressing-table.

"Boats," she said dreamily. "Boats."

Anita was brushing the girl's hair with long, gentle strokes, an unwonted attention.

"And he said there were boats, dearie?"

"I don't know"—vaguely. "I'm tired."

Anita plied her with more questions; but Hope either repeated, "I'm tired," or said nothing. Her eyelids fell over her eyes; she raised them with difficulty.

"Idiot!" The coo was gone from Miss Copley's voice. She hauled Hope up and gave her a push that sent her stumbling toward the bed. "Get in there and go to sleep!"

Hope lay down docilely, and almost immediately seemed to fall asleep.

Anita, after lowering the light, seated herself where she could keep her eyes on both her charge and the door. She sat upright, nerves and muscles rigid, listening for some activity below. Once she rose precipitately and, stepping softly past Hope's bed, opened the door and listened. Coming back, she took up the same waiting attitude and pressed her hands distractedly to her temples.

Hope wondered how she could expect to hear anything. The wind was furious now; sheets of lightning alternated with the roll and crash of thunder. Anita's nervousness was visibly increased by the uproar; but Hope was not affected. What was this disturbance of the elements compared to the storm within her heart?

She lay there, stirring a little at the reverberations of an especially loud peal, and watching. Time, which had resolved itself into suspense, had never gone so slowly.

Over an hour, surely almost two, must have passed, and they had not brought Kelsey back. She dared not allow herself to hope. They might be holding him in the old house until the storm abated. But, nevertheless, they had not come. She felt sure of that. If they had, Anita Copley, showing by the perpetual tapping of her foot, the constant gnawing of her lip, her whole strained attitude, the wear and torment she was enduring, would either have heard them or been summoned.

At last the woman could bear her vigil no longer. She got up again, bent over Hope to assure herself that she was asleep, then, turning down the light to a spark, went out, locking the door behind her.

The storm was lessening in violence, and Hope propped herself up on her pillows, determined to listen for any indications that might betoken Bristow's return. But although she was not conscious of physical fatigue, she was mentally and emotionally exhausted, and before she knew it she slept.

WHEN she woke the next morning, a heavy gale was blowing from the sea and the rain was coming down steadily. She was glad of that. It would obliterate any trace of Kelsey's and her footprints about the house. But she was angry with herself for sleeping.

Yet her brain felt clearer for the rest. She was calmer, more able to keep at elbow-length the black, hopeless despair that threatened to engulf her.

If they had Kelsey—and, for the present, she clung to the belief that they had not—she would know it as soon as she saw Anita Copley. The woman would not be able wholly to conceal either her relief or her anxiety.

But if Kelsey were free, then she knew that he would in some way reach her father. He would have to be very wary, for these people would not leave a stone unturned to prevent him.

It might be days before he could find the safe way. And every hour, every moment of delay meant an increase of danger to herself. Again she struggled with panic. Terrific questions assaulted her brain. What would they do with her?

Cold to her finger-tips, nauseated, shaking from head to foot, she buried her face in the pillows, praying wildly for strength, for courage, for time. Oh, most of all, for time!

She sat up in bed and pushed her hair back from her face. Give her time, and she— What could she do?

But now the query was not a cry of despair but a call—a trumpet-call to her spirit. She had circumvented them once, fooled them. Was there no way she could do it again? Was any one ever entirely helpless? She could not, would not admit it.

The iron in her nature, that refusal to accept an ultimate defeat, which she had inherited from the father who started with nothing but his hands and his brain, asserted itself. There must be something she could do to gain delay. Somewhere in this chain of circumstance which bound her there must be a weak link.

But what was it? She was one, in a fixed place, this room; the others were three, and moved about at will—three acting in concert. Acting in concert! With the repetition of the words a thrill ran over her from head to foot, and there came a flash of illumination.

If that unity, that close concord, could be broken, if they got to arguing and disagreeing among themselves, it would inevitably mean postponement of action. That was all she asked—if Kelsey had not already been taken—postponement of action.

But how precipitate this dissension? What weapons had she, whom they regarded as an imbecile?

She was up now, walking about the room, seeking in movement the clarity of vision that would show her the way.

She stopped before the mirror, gazing fixedly yet almost unseeingly at her own reflected face and figure. Suddenly, while her mind still grappled with the question, she woke to a vivid consciousness of that image in the glass, and a deep feminine intuition supplied the answer.

Her beauty! Woman's greatest weapon since the world began. It was all that was left her. With it, backed by her wits, she must play a last desperate game with her three antagonists.

She looked at the little clock on the dressing-table. It was growing late. Miss Copley would be in at any moment now. She must dress and be ready for her.

SHE was just putting the finishing touches to her toilet when the nurse entered with the breakfast-tray. Hope's heart stopped, and then beat madly. Anita looked as if she had not closed her eyes through the night. They were weary, hollow, rimmed with shadow. Her cheeks were wan. Signs plain as print that Kelsey had not yet been captured.

As she saw Hope standing there fully dressed, she halted so abruptly that the dishes rattled on the tray. She put it down hastily and looked at her patient with unconcealed amazement.

"You're not usually so spry," she said sourly. "What did you fix your hair that way for?"

Hope affected astonishment at the question.

"Why, I always do it this way."

Anita scowled, but seemed unable to take her eyes off the girl.

"Eat your breakfast," she said peremptorily, and, walking over to the window, stood with her back to Hope, looking out on the rain-soaked grounds, biting her raw lip in absorbed cogitation. Finally she turned as Hope was finishing her coffee.

"I'll get your pencil and paper for you."

Hope objected, pushing out her hands pettishly.

"I never want to see them again," she said. "What would I do with pencil and paper? I have no one to write to."

Miss Copley gave her another long look, a peculiarly sinister one this time, and left the room.

A little later, Dr. Bristow knocked, unlocked the door and came in. He was tubbed and dressed with his usual meticulous care, but he looked even more worn and harassed than Miss Copley.

As she saw this, Hope's eye brightened, her color bloomed.

"Good-morning, Doctor," she said blithely.

"Good-morning." He stood gazing at her from under his heavy brows—the searching, comprehensive glance of the born diagnostician.

"I was tired last night, but I feel as fresh as paint this morning." Her tone was buoyant. "I remember things."

His remarkable eyes pierced her through and through—an inquisition; but she bore it unwaveringly.

At last he forced a smile.

"That's good," he said, with an effort at heartiness. "What do you remember?"

"I remember going away with that crazy man. He told me not to go in to supper, to stay on the porch and wait for him. Then he took my arm and ran down the steps and jumped into the car. I took the chauffeur's place, I don't know why. I didn't know I could drive. But I can"—delightedly. "It's as easy as that!" She turned her hand over. "And I knew all the roads as well as if I'd been over them hundreds of times."

He rubbed his chin, still studying her.

"Did any one stop you?" he asked so suddenly that, if she had not been on guard, it might have confused her.

"Yes; two men. They ran their car in front of us, and one of them came back. The crazy man told me to say I was Miss Copley. I am, too—Verna Copley. But the strange man thought I was Anita and gave me a package. The crazy man would not let me keep it. He put it in his pocket and told me to drive to the shore.

"Oh, it was fun! He said there were people after us, and I mustn't let them get us. And then we heard some one coming, and he told me to turn off, and we ran into a tree and were thrown out. I thought he was dead. But a man on a motor-cycle came along and pulled him from under the car and said he would go for a doctor."

"Did the man on the motor-cycle ask you any questions?"

"Yes; he asked me if I was hurt."

"Anything else? Sure?"—as she shook her head.

"Sure"—looking at him wonderingly.

"And what happened then?"

"The crazy man opened his eyes and got up. He said we must run to the shore and find a boat. But I knew the woods and the house, and I wanted to stay where we were. He wouldn't let me. He was rough and pulled me along. I'm afraid of the water at night, and I screamed. Then he swore and let me go. And I hid until the men came along and brought me home. I was glad when I saw you. I was frightened out there in the dark. He might have come back and killed me. Crazy people do."

"What makes you think he is crazy?"

She drew back and looked at him with a cunning, superior smile.

"Any one would know that. He talked crazy. He said I was some one else. He didn't tell me who; but he said that he'd discovered things and that I must go away with him. He acted crazy, too."

"You say you knew that old house?" Bristow's tone was casual but very winning.

"Yes. I wanted to go in it. But he wouldn't. He called it a trap."

"Didn't you live there once?"

"I don't know." Her forehead creased, as if the effort to recollect were painfully difficult. "But"—positively—"I do know that house some way. There's a big attic full of boxes. It was nice to play there. Still, I was glad to get home. Only"—lowering her voice and looking apprehensively toward the door—"she was cross. I don't like her. I hate her. Why don't you send her away and let me stay with you?" She came nearer, coaxing, entreating, her lips adorably pouted. "You're so wise and kind. I like to be with you. I like to look at you. You wear such beautiful clothes." She stroked the sleeve of his coat, as if its touch gave her a luxurious pleasure. "And your neckties. That's the loveliest black pearl I ever saw." She touched it with her finger and bent closer, so near him that her hair brushed his cheek.

"You've seen others, then?" he asked.

"Somewhere." She looked up at him, the perplexed pucker once more between her eyebrows. "I know them—I don't know how. Oh"—she caught his hand—"do let me stay with you! I'd be happy all the time then. But you'd have to send her away." She glanced once more at the door and spoke in a whisper close to his ear. "She'd be jealous. She's in love with you. But you won't marry her, will you? She's terribly common. And you're so different."

Bristow's lips curved ironically.

"Don't worry about that," he said lightly, and yet with a certain emphasis.

He sat down, the irony of his smile changing to a fleeting indulgence. He was looking beyond her, seeing a new perspective, reckoning other possibilities, calculating other chances. His eyes had the preoccupied yet alert look of one who has stumbled upon a new and better solution to a laboriously worked-out problem.

"You won't let that crazy man take me away again?" Hope's magnetic, appealing voice broke in on his meditations.

The recall from dreams was unpleasant.

"Kelsey"—involuntarily, ugly lines marking his face. "No; I will not."

"And I can drive your car with you soon?" she begged.

"Eh? Drive my car with me? I think so, my dear. I am very much inclined to think so."

"Oh!" She clasped her hands on her breast, the picture of happy expectancy.

A glorious creature! Bristow's breath came a little faster. Young, lovely, rich! How could he have been so blind, so obtuse to the possibilities of the situation?

AND at this moment Anita Copley chose to return to the room.

She stood inside the door, glancing from one to the other, varying emotions depicted on her face. Surprise. Suspicion deepening to comprehension. And then jealous anger.

It seemed to stir a sardonic amusement in Bristow.

"Why, here is our dear Miss Copley!" he cried. "Sit down"—offering her a chair. "I'm just leaving." He paused by Hope and patted her lightly on the cheek. "Try to love her, my child." His eyes, mirthfully malicious, were on Anita's darkly flushing face. "I know it's hard, but never give up trying."

Hope laughed gaily, as at some joke they shared together, and clung to his hand. He smilingly released himself and left, without another glance at Anita. Hope ran to the door after him; but the nurse caught her and dragged her back with vicious force.

"I'm going to drive Dr. Bristow's car with him," Hope said joyously, wriggling away. "He's promised me!" Anita gave her a savage look, but made no answer. "He came to see me this morning. You think he likes you. But he doesn't; he doesn't!"

The woman wheeled with uplifted hand and started in pursuit; but Hope was too agile for her. Anita stopped, panting, her hand on her chest.

"You shut up!" she said hoarsely. "I've heard enough out of you."

"You're in love with him!" The girl's face was elfishly acute as she taunted her jailer. She knew that she was going beyond the danger-line, but she took that risk. The further she could goad Anita the better. "And he doesn't care that for you!" She brought her fingers together and then opened them, blowing off an imaginary speck. "He likes me! He likes me!"

She kept up the chant until Anita's frayed self-control snapped. The nurse lunged forward and caught her tormentor by the shoulder; but Hope jerked away and danced across the room, continuing her singsong.

"He likes me! He likes me better! I'm younger and prettier. Younger and—" She made an unexpected rush and propelled Anita toward the mirror. "Look at us! Look!"—her chin on the woman's shoulder.

Anita stood trancelike for an instant, enthralled by the two faces so like and yet so different, with all the terrible difference in Hope's favor. It fascinated while it seared her, burned into her soul.

And then, before the younger woman could realize her purpose, she whirled. There was one stinging blow on the cheek that sent Hope staggering. Others, a rain of them, followed.

"Now, you crazy loon"—in a gasping, threadlike snarl—"keep still, or I'll give you worse! Keep still, I tell you!"—as Hope crouched and whimpered. "I'll see about this! I'll see about this!" She rushed from the room.

Hope caressed her bruised cheek and smiled.

HOBO BILL sat in what he called the "parlor" of his suite in the sanatorium, an old man in a worn velvet dressing-gown. A steamer-rug lay across his shrunken knees; his big knotted hands rested inert on the padded arms of his chair; his head was sunk forward on his breast. From time to time his heavy lids lifted and his bleary, dim-sighted eyes turned toward the clock.

These rooms of his, in their opulent bad taste, were reminiscent of New York's vanished Tenderloin—a crimson-velvet carpet, thick crimson hangings, furniture upholstered in crimson plush, the mahogany carved with nymphs and satyrs. On the walls, in heavy gilt frames, were great twelve- and fourteen-foot canvases, mostly studies of the feminine nude. Gilt-surrounded mirrors reflected the glaring whiteness of marble Venuses on red draped pedestals. The mantelpiece and tables were a jumble of signed photographs—prize-fighters of the day when Higgins' Sixth Avenue saloon was the rendezvous of the sporting world—famous race-horses, ladies whose forgotten names were once a toast in the red-light district.

Higgins, amid his splendors, was a figure of old age that inspired no veneration; his decrepitude excited no pity. He was like some gray old cobra lurking motionless under the red roses of an Indian garden, sinister, remorseless.

His valet, moving noiselessly about the room, stepped to a buffet, and measuring out a dose from a medicine-bottle, held it to his lips. He gulped it down automatically, without comment or any change in his position. His mind was miles away. He was facing a crisis, but he showed no sign of perturbation. Waiting, he betrayed no impatience except for that occasional glance at the clock.

At twenty minutes after three Bristow and Anita Copley came in together. Their entrance was hurried; and one had only to glance at them to see that the storm-signals were flying. He was calm enough, but the grooved lines from nose to mouth deepened his faint, sarcastic smile.

An ill-suppressed hysteria showed under Anita's efforts at composure. Two scarlet spots burned high on her cheek-bones. There was a constant spasmodic movement of her mouth.

Higgins peered at them through his heavy-lensed spectacles.

"You're late," he croaked coldly. To his valet he gave a curt order: "Get out!"

"Sorry," Bristow said; "but I had to wait for that potterer, Morton. He very seldom leaves the place, but to-day—of all days—he chose to depart on some errand of his own and stayed over two hours. The time passed excitingly, though. Anita"—contemptuously—"saw fit to become temperamental."

Anita pulled at her handkerchief as if she would tear it to shreds, but shut her teeth and said nothing.

"Humph," the old man grunted uncouthly. "You damn fools don't understand that this is no time for child's play. We're in a bad fix, I tell you."

"I don't see it," Bristow said coolly. "We've got the girl, and Kelsey's very happily drowned."

"Ain't no body been washed up yet, is there?"

"No; and there probably won't be for several days. If he isn't at the bottom of the bay, where is he? He may have wings now, but he didn't have them last night. The girl's story, the fact that they were undoubtedly making for the shore, his utter disappearance under a most exhaustive search—there can be only one answer."

"Well, mebbe," Higgins granted grudgingly. "You ain't drawed off the men, though, have you?"

"Certainly not. Every possible avenue to town is blocked; I don't believe even a mole could burrow through. And there isn't a brush pile or culvert or any other hiding-place within a radius of twenty miles that has been overlooked. Not a trace of him, though. I tell you again, the fellow's at the bottom of the bay."

"And our hundred thousand in Liberty Bonds along with him," mumbled the old man wryly.

"We'll get that back." Bristow spoke with consistent confidence. "The moment the body's recovered, I'll hear of it and be on the spot. Don't think that any life-guard or clam-digger can get away with that envelope. If I can't manage to lay hands on it myself, I'll see that it's turned over to the coroner. I've already informed him that Kelsey robbed my safe when he made the attack on me."

HIGGINS considered this; but having neither objection nor suggestion to offer, turned to another phase of the situation.

"How about this cockroach with the motor-cycle?" he demanded. "What's he up to, since he got turned out of the calaboose?"

"Saving his hide, I fancy. He knows enough to have a very wholesome respect for that message you sent him. They said he went to pieces badly when he saw it, and he told Simonds that this part of the country wouldn't see him soon again. Why, the poor rat was afraid even to stick by the train. He suspected that we might have a reception prepared for him in New York and hopped off somewhere along the line. Bryan says he was in a sweat all the way, and that he missed him for good after they reached Jamaica."

"We ought to have bumped him off long ago," Higgins growled, "and been done with it. You're too chicken-hearted, Doc."

"Rot! The fellow's served our purpose in everything he's done. And you know from the report of the telephone conversations, he's been holding back information from Ranger. As I look at it, he's been trying to play a little game of his own and pick up a few crumbs for himself when we made the big haul."

"Well, mebbe." A disinterested action was beyond Higgins's comprehension. "I've sort of thought that myself. Still, it looks funny, his gettin' hooked up with them two last night."

"A mere coincidence," Bristow insisted. "He didn't have and hasn't now any idea who they were. Do you suppose that, if he'd dreamed the girl was Hope Ranger, he'd ever have gone chasing off for a doctor and left her there alone? Or let Simonds lock him up and keep him behind the bars all night, and never have breathed a word?"

Higgins shook his head unsatisfied.

"I'll answer them questions"—scowlingly—"when you tell me what he was doin' on that road, and what brung him down to this part of the country at all."

Bristow pursed his mouth.

"The man's a vagabond, a wanderer, and——"

"And just happened to be ridin' out this way?"—witheringly. "That's too thin, Doc, and you know it. You can't charge up everything to this coincidence stuff.

"Look at the facts for yourself, Doc. This snitch is foolin' round up in Westchester, plumb at sea. Then somethin' happens and he calls up Ranger. We know that he told him about havin' been bamboozled at the crossin' and that Ranger come back with the news of the message from us. But they talked longer than that; and what was said we don't know. Ranger was careful, though, to see that he had a clear wire; so it's pretty sure that some fairly important information was passed. Then the next thing we hear of this 'El Paso Ed'—no; 'Juarez Charlie'—he's down here within five miles of the sanatorium. I don't know how you figure, Doc; but it looks to me like somebody had been handin' out a pretty hot tip."

Bristow thought a minute.

"The whole point is this," he said finally: "What Juarez Charlie may know or suspect is immaterial; we can take care of him, if necessary. But what he may have told Ranger is another kettle of fish. I hold, though, that every indication points to his having said little or nothing. If his information amounted to a whoop," he argued, "would he have had to swindle the garage man to get some petty cash for expenses? If he really had learned anything, he must have been holding out, playing Ranger for his own ends."

HOBO Bill pondered this, thoughtfully rubbing his great, protuberant knuckles.

"Well," he admitted, "I won't deny there ain't some merit in that view of it. But look here, Doc"—scowling again, as a new angle of the situation presented itself to him—"if he didn't put Ranger wise to something, how did that damn private secretary come to show up here this mornin' and get him out? I understand that Simonds didn't let him do no telephonin'."

"I was bothered over that, too," Bristow answered. "But I've discovered that it came about through some friends of the fellow's who happened to stop at the Lone Hill garage and learned of his predicament. He'd had one of the women to dinner at the Lone Hill Inn. Bryan might have been a mutual friend, and naturally she would telephone him."

"Yes?" Higgins's wheezy voice rasped like a file. "And, mebbe, this woman he had to dinner—that'd be just about the time he telephoned to Ranger—might have mentioned that he'd learn somethin' to his advantage down to Bristow's sanatorium. She couldn't have got that from Bryan; he don't know nothin'." He flung himself forward on his shaky old elbows. "Who was this woman he had out to dinner? Who was these friends that helped him out of the hole?"

"I don't know," returned Bristow shortly. "I saw no reason to shadow the man after we took his spark-plugs and left him stranded and done for there at the crossing. It was unfortunate, perhaps; but there's no necessity to get excited about it. No especial harm's been done."

"No harm been done?" Higgins' great hands clutched at the arms of his chair. "No harm! You've made a damn muddle out of it. That's what's been done. Here's that cheap grafter and that sissy private secretary walkin' around, with God knows how much of the truth in their heads—reg'lar sticks of dannymite, ready to blow us to hell and gone! Why ain't they been croaked? What do we keep that bunch of gorillas up in New York for, eatin' their heads off?

"And here's a woman, too! A woman, that has somehow got on to somethin', and is lettin' her tongue run loose. Another stick of dannymite. And her bunch of friends! A whole automobile-load of dannymite. Who is she? You don't know. Who are they? You don't know. By cripes, you don't know nothin'!

"You want to be a master mind!" He poured out a stream of abuse. "By God, you ain't got the brains nor the guts to be a small-town chicken-thief. What did you do when you ketched that Kelsey gettin' an earful on you? If I'd 'a' been here, he'd have been jolted off so quick 'twould have made his hair curl. Anita saw it was the only thing to do. But you wouldn't listen to her. You was runnin' things. You wanted to try an experiment, and handle the matter on smoother, more scientific lines. A nice mess your scientific handlin' has got us into! And now you're up to some more of it, with them damn bonds."

"I told you," said Bristow icily, "that the coroner understands that my safe was robbed."

"Hell's bells! Didn't you never stop to think that them bonds was traceable? Do you suppose that Loring Ranger didn't take the numbers on 'em, or that when he reads in the papers about some fellow being fished out of the Great South Bay with a hundred thousand in Liberty Bonds on him, he ain't goin' to make some inquiries? Good God!

You must be hankerin' to spend the rest of your life in stir. You——"

He choked, unable to go on. His face was purple, his great, sagging body shaking and quivering, his arms beating on his chair.

Anita Copley was at his side. Bending over him, she tried to quiet him. Bristow stood aloof, white-faced and very stiff.

The gust of fury subsided as suddenly as it had risen. Higgins, after catching his breath, lay back in his chair. The purple slowly receded from his face and left it gray and impassive once more. His hands ceased shaking, and again rested motionless on the arms of his chair.

When he spoke at last, it was in his usual grating monotone; but the settled, impervious quiet of his voice was more alarming than his outburst of anger.

"We can't take no more chances," he said. 'We'll end this Hope Ranger job to-night."

"You mean—" Anita Copley asked sharply.

"There won't be no such person to-morrow."

ONE could have heard a pin drop. There was dead silence in the room, but it vibrated with the clash of opposing wills.

Anita Copley had drooped her lids, but the glitter of her eyes showed beneath her lashes. She was watching Bristow.

He had not flinched during Higgins' attack on him. Disputes between them were infrequent; but they had occurred before, and he had learned to steel himself against these exhibitions of ruffianism.

But the grim ultimatum took him unawares. It was like a thunderclap to him. For a second he felt like crumpling; then he realized that his back was against the wall, and he had to engage not one but two opponents, for Anita would stand with Higgins.

But even in this pass, he took pleasure in thwarting them, in following the opposite tack from the one they expected.

"Ah? Extreme measures?" He spoke quietly, implying by his tone that Higgins had not given a final decree but had suggested an expedient which was open for discussion. "Well, if that is the only recourse, I am for it. But to give up without a struggle at this stage, to charge off so promising an enterprise as a dead loss——"

"Better to take a loss," said Higgins sententiously, "than a long trip up the river."

"Just so," Bristow agreed. "But isn't it better to run the chance of Sing Sing than to risk the electric chair."

"Ain't no such chance"—gruffly—"not with me runnin' the show."

The old man was betraying irritation again, and Bristow shifted his sails.

"Probably not; I didn't mean that seriously. It's the loss I'm thinking of. Not only of money, a round million at the least, but of prestige and authority.

"I hate to cave in; I admit it. I dare say my pride is involved. And is it wise to do so? We must remember that this undertaking has required a lot of agents. If we acknowledge defeat now—and isn't that what your plan amounts to?—the news will seep out and filter through the whole organization. Blatherskites like this Juarez Charlie would delight in spreading it. And you know how mutinous these crooks are at accepting control. Why, let even a hint get out that we are less than omnipotent, and—bang goes the entire system!

"I'm presenting these objections," he explained, "chiefly to clear up my own mind and get a dispassionate view of it all. If there's no other way out of the dilemma, of course I agree. But it seems to me, Alderman, that with that cool, far-sighted brain of yours to guide us, we ought to scheme out something that will spell profit and not bankruptcy. We don't want to let ourselves be stampeded when a little nerve, a little luck and a little ingenuity might save us."

Higgins' wrinkled hand fumbled up to his chin. He showed that, in spite of himself, Bristow's arguments had given him pause to think.

"You talk like you had somethin' a'ready up your sleeve." He squinted shrewdly through his glasses. "Judgin' by recent performances, 'tain't probably worth hell-room. But I'll listen. What's your big idea, Doc? Spring it."

Bristow laughed deprecatingly.

"You could hardly dignify it by calling it 'an idea.' Just a suggestion that's been floating round in my mind while we've been talking. It's hardly formed yet. It will take you to put it in shape and work out the details. But, first, let's run over the situation and see just where we stand. As we

"You ——" Higgins choked, unable to go on. Anita Copley was at his side. Bending over him, she tried to quiet him. Bristow stood aloof, white-faced and very stiff.

all know, up to last night everything was working as smoothly as we could desire. Then comes this escape, and, contingent upon it and coincident with it, we find ourselves threatened from half a dozen different quarters."

He checked them off on his fingers.

"Kelsey and the girl? That's pretty well cleared up. The one is food for the fishes; the other back in our hands.

"Juarez Charlie?" He held up another finger. "Heading for the West in a panic. He's shot his bolt, and won't give us any more trouble. Bryan? I don't even take him into account. Let him tell the little he knows. If he does, no one will suffer but himself.

"Then we have the automobile-party and the woman Juarez Charlie had to dinner. What that amounts to we can't tell until we learn who they are and the nature of the information, if any, that they hold. I will have all that by to-morrow; but I'm positive that we'll find them quite negligible factors. Juarez Charlie merely picked up something from their talk and pieced it on to what he already knew.

"Last; but not least, is the unfortunate matter of the bonds. There, I agree, lies our especial danger. But it is a wholly potential one. Those bonds may never be recovered. Time enough to meet that emergency when they are. The coroner needs money; he can be fixed. It's two to one, anyhow, that Ranger would never hear of their recovery, and ten to one that he'd never connect them with his vanished ransom.

"And that's all." He held up his open hand, with the fingers spread out. "Unless we admit the possibility of some one building up a cohesive case from the chatter of Creamer and village gossips; and I submit that even the infallible detective of fiction would find himself stumped there.

"Now, where in all this," he asked persuasively, "is the pressing exigency that is driving us to—er—final action? I quite fail to see it. But I do see very plainly where we are bound to lose heavily through making a ghastly mistake. Ranger, so long as he believes his daughter is alive, can be played; but we will have to keep proving it to him. He will balk at the two hundred thousand he is to pay on Friday unless we can convince him that she is still living. Worse than that, we scrap our organization for——"

"You've said all that before." Higgins was growing restless. "This lawyer-talk of yours, with your 'whereases' and 'to wits,' ain't gettin' us nowhere. If you've got anything in your system more'n just rattle, for cripes' sake pull it."

"Very well then; I will." Bristow paused the wink of an eyelash and then plunged. "My idea is, return Hope Ranger to her father."

IF HE had been seeking to create a dramatic effect, he could not have succeeded better. Miss Copley's lowered lids shot up. She expelled her breath in a gasp. Higgins reared back in his chair.

"Are you crazy?" the old man rumbled.

"Oh, I don't mean that she should be restored at once. The way would have to be paved. But, if you want to play safe, and at the same time dig your fingers deep into Ranger's bank-roll, I'm telling you how to do it."

"Doc, you've gone dippy," Higgins declared with conviction; "nutty as a March hare. What do you think? That Ranger'll be so grateful for gettin' his daughter back that he's goin' to forgive and forget and pass out a chunk of kale? Try it and see. When he finds out what she's been through, and what a wreck you've made of her, he'll want to strangle you."

"But he isn't going to find her a wreck."

"How're you goin' to help it? She's bughouse, ain't she?"

"Um-m-m. She's— But what's the use of going into medical explanations? It's enough to say that she can be cured. Or, rather, that I can cure her."

Anita Copley made a curious choking sound in her throat, like the stifled cry of a wild animal. Bristow ignored it.

"Suppose, then"—he was talking directly to Higgins—"instead of working under cover, and following our original plan of getting all we can out of Ranger and then putting the girl out of the way, we come boldly into the open. We notify him that we have reason to suspect that his daughter is held here as a patient. We give him and his wife the opportunity to identify and observe her. But we do not let her see or speak to them. We explain that the shock might be disastrous in her present condition.

Meanwhile, we are doing everything possible for the girl. We enlarge her privileges, give her the tenderest care, distract her mind, buoy up her spirits and eventually cure her. Don't you imagine that her parents will be so grateful that no fee I could name would seem exorbitant?

"More than that, I can easily convince them that she will require constant trained supervision to prevent a recurrence of the neurosis. Alderman, we can capitalize that girl into an annual income. I'll occupy the position of family friend and benefactor with all the business and social opportunities that the term implies."

"All very nice!" Higgins ran his fingers through his straggling gray hair. "Got some points, too. But how the devil, Doc, are you ever going to explain her bein' here or square this up with your passin' her off as Anita's sister?"

"Oh, that?" He examined his fingernails. "Why, Anita will simply have to disappear. Go to Tokyo or Buenos Aires or some other charming place and enjoy herself. Then we can very plausibly say that we were imposed on by one of our nurses, who introduced the dazed girl here as her sister. Our suspicions were roused; but before we could question the nurse, she got frightened and took French leave. We can frame up a suicide for her if it's necessary."

THE Copley woman's agitation, which had been steadily rising, suddenly broke all bounds. She flung herself forward to face Bristow.

"So that's your beautiful scheme, is it?" The low, restrained speech which she so carefully affected gave way to her natural coarse shrillness. "I'm to be the goat and shoulder all the blame, am I? I'm to be conveniently shunted out of the way, so that you can carry on your love-affair? Well, not by a damn sight, Harvey Bristow! Oh, don't tell me!" she swept on tempestuously. "I'm not blind. I've been fooled; but I can see plain enough now what's been going on between you and that dough-faced baby vamp. Cure her? Of course you can cure her! There's never been anything the matter with her. She's only been playing it under your instructions, so as to trick me."

"That's likely—when you were the one that first insisted she was 'off,'" scoffed Bristow. "You called me a fool when I pointed out that she might be only a clever malingerer."

"Of course I did! You're smooth, Harvey. Do you think I've forgotten all those long lectures you used to give me about the difficulty of detecting the difference between sham and real symptoms, and the tests you told me to apply? All work of preparation. Why, you scheming devil, you had this whole thing in mind before the girl was ever brought here! Social position and a rich marriage—that was what you were aiming for. And you used the alderman and me as pawns until you could find out whether she'd fall for you or not. She has; the silly little fool can't hide it. But you knew all the time that you'd have to get rid of me, and you stacked the cards to do it. All this muddling! You don't muddle, Harvey. This escape! I'll bet you framed it. I'll bet this whole Kelsey business is a frame-up. He was your man. You brought him here. You two used to have your heads always together."

She was firing her accusations one after the other—all the rankling, pent-up suspicions she had been harboring since morning. Bristow tried to interrupt, but she shrieked him down.

"And now, with everything fixed, as you think, you spring this plan to ship me off to the other side of the world and make it impossible for me ever to show my face again. That wasn't hatched to-day—or on the spur of the moment. That was all studied out and arranged long in advance. You thought that you could catch the alderman and me with your bait of saving the organization and getting a fresh chance at Ranger's money.

"He's planned it from the start, I tell you, Alderman. He and that sneaking society chicken have worked it out between them. But you've overreached yourself this time, Harvey. Never think that you are going to marry Hope Ranger. Not while I'm alive!"

She paused for breath, and Bristow seized the opportunity to make himself heard. He realized that it was time. Higgins was looking at him more and more blackly.

"I ought to order you into a strait-jacket." He looked at her with cold scorn. "You're a candidate for the violent ward with your hysterical delusions.

"Alderman, I ask you"—he appealed to the old man—"who was it that first proposed this abduction? Whose idea was it? We all remember the day Anita came home chuckling because a salesgirl in a shop had mistaken her for Hope Ranger. It flattered her—a piece of gutter-mud passing for a pearl. She harped on it, thought about it, finally told us she had a plan to bag a fortune."

"Yes; and you set right to work to see how you could turn my plan to your own advantage and do me and the alderman."

"No, my dear; it was you who did that. Do you think I haven't fathomed what is in that warped, calculating brain of yours? Loring Ranger and his wife"—significantly—"might soon die—the weight of grief and all that. Then you could appear as the missing daughter and lay claim to the estate."

THE old man, scowling in his chair, had listened keenly to their exchange of aspersions. Now he seemed to weary of it, and, leaning forward, he banged down his fist.

"Shut up, you two!" he ordered. "We've had enough of this. I'll settle what's to be done."

He glanced from one to the other, reflecting. For perhaps a minute he pondered, his cruel, evil face sagging down into the folds of his velvet dressing-gown. Then, with the unconscious gesture of a Caligula, he turned one of his great thumbs down upon the arm of his chair.

"You've figured a pretty layout, Doc," he wheezed. "Worked it out well. Nothin' to it. Too risky. Ranger'd investigate the thing down to the ground, never let up on it till he got to bed-rock. And it won't stand no search-light. You and Anita've been keepin' company too long; and Anita's got a record. But I did get one idea out of all that harangue of yours—that'n about Anita disappearin'. We'll use that. Now, don't start nothin' "—as the Copley woman whirled on him. "You don't get me yet.

"What you'll do, Anita"—he laid down his directions—"is dress the Ranger girl in your nurse's clothes—everythin', mind you, shoes, stockings and all—while you get into hers, and take her place. Then she, passin' off as you, will go out to-night on an automobile ride and have a fatal accident, all smashed up beyond hope of recognition. Anita Copley will be dead, and Verna Copley, the crazy sister, will be left on our hands, with no relatives to look after her. We'll get in a new nurse that don't know neither of you to take care of her, but of course we can't keep a dependent girl in an expensive joint like this. And so in a day or two we ship her off to a public asylum, where she—that is, you—can get well as soon as you please. Then let Loring Ranger or anybody else come snoopin' round here if they want to. There ain't nothin' to be found out."

She considered his proposal, eying him doubtfully, and then nodded her assent.

"I'll take it on," she said; "but, if you two are double-crossing me, God help you!"

"There's only one point that bothers me," Higgins debated. "How're we goin' to get this girl out to the automobile so it looks like she goes willingly and of her own accord?"

"Oh, I'll fix that," the woman promised. "I'll tell her she's going to drive with Dr. Bristow. She'll go like a lamb."

"Then I'm to be her escort?" Bristow asked bitterly. He knew that he was defeated.

Higgins looked at him with a smile of wintry derision.

"No; I guess we'll leave you out of this, Doc. We can't afford to have no mistakes made. I'll go along with the little lady myself. Kind o' bad for my rheumatism to have to lay there in the road when the car goes off the bridge; but I don't see no other way. No," he repeated; "we'll leave you out of this. We won't even ask you to give her the dope that finishes her. Anita can 'tend to that."

The superintendent straightened up as if to defy this show of authority. For a long minute he and Higgins faced each other. Then he left the room. As he flung out of the door, he collided with Morton, who was crouching at the key-hole.

With one hand he caught the house physician by the throat, choking off even a sound from him. With the other hand he closed the door behind him.

Higgins' plans are well laid, but there are some possibilities he has overlooked. The concluding instalment of "Swallowed Up" is the most exciting of all. See August EVERYBODY'S—out July 15th.

George *and* Pigweeds

You, Who Have Been Slaving in Your Gardens, Take a Few Minutes Off and Read the Observations of George's Friend on a Certain Pest That Can Be Neither Ostracized, Segregated nor Eliminated

By James Ash

GEORGE, you're my friend and I'm going to be truthful, but I want sympathy, not your usual line of subway repartee. You're always guying me about abandoning the gaieties of the city in order to be in the country and live close to nature. Well, just this one time I'm going to let down my guard and admit I'm living so blamed close to Dame Nature that the neighbors must be talking about us.

The trouble is you can't ever teach her anything. She's that set in her ways. I've been at it three years now, and I came out here with an awful lot of information I'd got out of books and that would have improved her quite a bit if she'd been anyways adaptable or willing to learn. But you never can tell what a woman is like just by looking at her.

I won't ever be that happy again. Yes; I *have* sort of got the blues. You know those onion-sets I was boasting about in my last letter? Well, last night Mike Davitt's old cow got in. This morning that onion bed looked like a relief map of the Alps done by a nervous Greenwich Village artist who stuttered. I couldn't believe any one ordinary cow could do it, and I wasn't satisfied until I went back home with Mike after he'd come over to complain about the way his milk tasted and counted that cow's legs myself. Four was right.

And right on top of that I found that those pet evergreen vines of mine weren't fruiting specimens, and there'll never be any of those red berries up against our white house. Of course I could get a fresh set and start over again, but that vine's one weak point is that it's a slow grower.

Of course it isn't just these two things that make me blue. They just sort of remind me of a lot of other things that aren't the way I'd planned them. Which reminds me that right this minute I ought to be out in the flower garden weeding that pigweed before any more of it goes to seed and starts another crop of the pest. That was one of the first rough things Dame N. did to me, though I didn't know it at the time. Took me by the hand and led me out to where my first flowers and vegetables were just beginning to come up. I beamed on them happily, but she pointed in the rows between them at a lot of tiny, innocent-looking green things and said, "Meet the pigweed," and went away and left me. And that's all there was to that—then.

George, a pigweed is both an irresistible force and an immovable body, blended into one and working overtime. Pigweeds don't ask anything of anybody. They don't need to. Even Dame Nature turned round and went away as soon as she'd introduced me. None of the books had introduced me. Those on gardening dismiss him with a jaunty direction to "Keep the weeds down." But you can't ostracize a pigweed that way.

They say that when God got all through making the growing things for man, He made the strawberry for Himself. Well, my theory is that *after* that the devil made the pigweed for *him*self. And he did a darned good job. It's the greatest of his works, and he was some worker. Probably the pigweed is why Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden.

A pigweed begins making trouble the minute he shows above ground. I never saw a weed that could look more like more kinds of young plants. You can tell by pulling 'em up, for the pigweed has a long, thin red root, but pulling up little flower and vegetable plants by mistake discourages 'em, even if you admit your error and apologize. And, on the other hand, it does not hurt a pigweed. Just let him lie on the ground, and his root curls into it and he goes on growing as if nothing had happened. If you mash one into the ground with your heel, you just give him a better start.

All they ask is to be near enough the ground to see it. I brought some into the house and put them on the window-sill, where they could see out by raising up a bit, and they all grew. You could lock them up in a closet, and if your hands were soiled when you handled 'em, they'd get enough nourishment to live on.

The only sure way to get rid of one is to can him and burn the can.

George, do you remember Henry Bosford, who you said was so persistent that if you stuck a postage-stamp on him and nailed it fast the stamp would give up and fall off? Well, Henry was a mere flutterbudget compared to even a slack-willed pigweed. I never saw a trial or situation too severe for a pigweed. Will start in the dark under another plant, grow up through it and shade it to death. Grows under water or without any. Quits during winter merely because it thinks it's earned a rest—and it has. No other weed can grow if a pigweed decides at any time to use the same place.

LET it alone, and it will grow higher than you are and so strong that often you can't pull it up with both hands. And produce a billion seeds. Get your garden all clean of it by a season's work, and along in the autumn a whole new crop will come up. And "intelligence of flowers" is right. Those new little pigweeds know just what the day of the month is. "So?" they say. "Too late for us to get our six-foot growth this year. Um; let's see. This is the tenth; by the twenty-second we'll have the first hard frost—twelve days—that gives me time to grow one half-inch high and still bear seed." So they do it. I've seen 'em—thousands of 'em. The only one I ever knew to die from what you might call natural causes was one we happened to dump the ice-cream freezer on four days earlier than he'd figured the first frost, and he was so humiliated over the miscalculation that he sort of drooped and pined away.

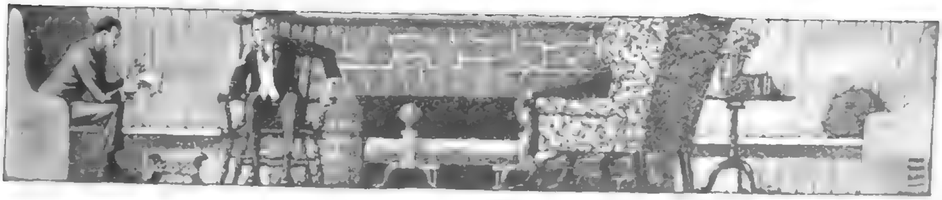
If pigweeds were in the flower catalogues, they'd be the only thing in it that really "has no enemies." Insects walk round them; disease will tackle a garden stake before it will waste effort on a pigweed. Probably they're called pigweed because they're the only thing a pig won't eat.

Seeds? Seeds? Oh, boy! It's the best thing he does. An adding-machine would strike if told to count the seeds on a single mature pigweed. George, if the efficiency experts ever meet up with the pigweed, they'll have statues or oil-paintings of him in every factory and office in the land, and start a movement for making him the national flower, particularly as he's too efficient to waste time by having any flowers.

Well, George, you and your eternal joshings over my liking for the country are just like the pigweed. Nothing can stop you, and you go on forever until you go heavily to seed. And then you start all over again, and when you're all done, you haven't been anything but a pest, and the garden and I go on just the same. I knew that, being a pigweed, if you ever began this letter you'd go clear on to the end and get this little message, so I gave you a long walk. And now you can walk back again or stay where you are or go anywhere else.

But, George, I want you to consider the good points of my pigweeds, too. They don't rattle on the paving-blocks or borrow money or honk a horn or drag you out to bum shows or dry dinners or hold a watch on you or tie you to a desk or stand on your feet or elbows during rush hours. And, George, the next time you ride in the subway or walk up Fifth Avenue, I want you to remember that a pigweed has no odor. And then, George, when you've thought all these things over, I want you to consider one of this little fellow's other virtues—a pigweed doesn't josh three years steadily on the same subject without knowing any more about said subject than a pigweed knows about you. Also, even if it did, one can, as I said before, can a pigweed.

Good-by, George. Come up for a visit: You've owed me one for three years. And if you start up on this joshing game, I'll take you out and set you to pulling pigweeds. I think you owe me that, too.



Everybody's Chimney Corner

Where Reader, Author and Editor Gather to Talk Things Over

WHY do people become fiction-writers? Is it because they have stories to tell and can't be happy without telling them? Captain Achmed Abdullah, whose "Remittance-woman" opens this issue, says, "I write simply because I have to."

> Shall we be highbrow [he goes on] and call it a cosmic urge? That's really what it is. It's the only thing I take seriously—my writing—besides certain friendships and an unshaken conviction that I am one of the leading poker players, draw as well as stud, in America.

CAPTAIN ABDULLAH writes to the Chimney Corner that he had much rather write a story than a paragraph about himself.

> Not [he continues] because of that inverted egoism called modesty or false shame. Wasn't it Goethe who said that "only rogues are modest"? But because it is so much easier to write a story. A story—to be one—has to be logical, you know, with a beginning, a middle and an end, and one's life, away from the bare facts printed in one's lifetime in "Who's Who," and, after one has kicked off, in the obituary notices, is so utterly and fascinatingly illogical. Why am I here in America? I came here—I remember vaguely—to play polo; returned and remained because the land got beneath my Arab skin and refused to budge.

AND he has lived the story life—the life of romance. He tells of his past:

> It's a "workable past·" I've kicked about, from Tibet to central Africa, and from Seattle to China. The result to me, personally, has been a large ccumulation of tolerance—with a saving excepon: I hate all drones and parasites. Chiefly and remost do I hate among them those—is there a olite English word for them? The French call em "*souleneurs*." Chiefly do I hate those wot-ye-ll-'ems—penny-a-liners—critics, literary and draatic, who spend half an hour and earn from three to five dollars in shooting off their mouths about something an artist has spent many weary weeks in the writing and many weary years in the living.

ANOTHER author, Courtney Ryley Cooper, whose "Willie Takes the Roses" begins on page 63, testifies as to why he writes fiction. "I live fiction, eat fiction and sleep fiction," he says. Which is another way of declaring that he simply has to write. But, oh, if only Mr. Cooper could write all of the experiences of his thirty-five years! Listen:

> Went through college once. All I saw was a worn-out overcoat, so didn't take it. Was too busy finding out where the good fishing-spots were to pay much attention to school, so quit at fifteen.
>
> Of course there was an incentive for quitting school. It lay in a printing shop down on Fifth Street, in Kansas City, where I had been born on a classic street known as Dripp, overlooking the beautiful, muddy Missouri. But to get back to that print shop. It was a lithograph outfit where small theatrical companies hung out, where actors were hired, and that sort of thing. And many a time I had found myself in front of the bulletin-board, reading the advertisements for actors—and wishing that I could land a job as such. Then, one day, the grand opportunity came. I was approached! The gent—I use the term because he used it himself—needed a character-man. I was supposed to play the part of a sixty-year-old doctor. And I was fifteen. I lasted until we got to Joplin, Missouri, something more than a whole hundred miles. Then they fired me. I wasn't a very good character-man.

BUT Cooper wasn't discouraged. By that time, the stage was in his blood.

> I went back to Kansas City, with about ten days of experience tucked in my bean, and forthwith got a job as juvenile, property-man, bill-distributor and various other things with a repertoire company. I did well until we got to Bevier, Missouri, where I couldn't buy any blanks for the revolvers. Every show we put on had shooting in it. But about that time I got an idea. I pulled the bullets from some

Captain Achmed Abdullah, formerly of the Turkish army, has lived the life of romance and adventure. His story, "The Remittance-woman," which opens this issue, will make you realize that.

> real cartridges and filled the vacancies with wax. I might as well have left the bullets in. When the blood ceased flowing that night after the big three-cornered duel-scene, I was calmly and coldly canned. As a property-man I was a good assistant to an undertaker. But is anybody downhearted at fifteen? Certainly not!

THERE followed turbulent experiences in melodrama, the ten, twenty and thirty variety. Then the financial crash, and Cooper managed, along with Clarence Stearns, to get to Lancaster, Missouri, thanks to the "blind baggage."

> We were hired by the cook of Barrett's Circus, a small "grafting" organization—Clarence as a side-show spieler, and myself as all the clowns, at five dollars a week. My other duties were to ride on top of the bear-cage in parade, play the snare-drum with the band for the evening "ballyhoo," sell tickets and split half the amount that I "short-changed" with the head of the privilege-car, clown the performance and do a turn in the concert, to say nothing of shillibering for the tatooed man and helping the fire-eating lady sell her photographs. It was a great life. We went out of more than one town at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, with a ring of canvas-men, armed with tent-stakes, surrounding the loading-runs and beaning any of the fervid townspeople who sought to set fire to the train.

AFTER this and a whirl with another circus or two, young Cooper turned his face toward literature by way of the Kansas City *Star*.

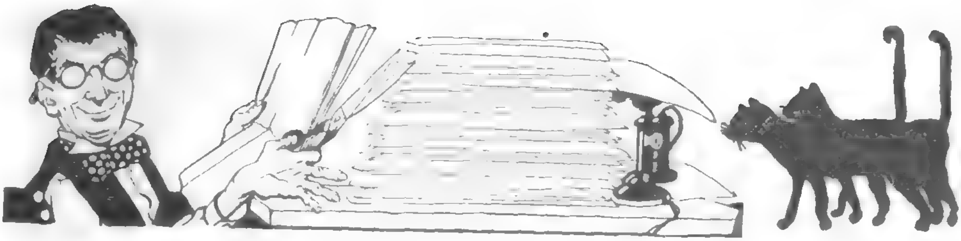
> The editor told me that if I could write as well as I said I could, he'd hire me.
>
> "Go out and do some feature-stories," he announced, "and if they're up to the mark, I'll hire you."
>
> I didn't even know what a feature-story was. But I was fired by ambition—always before I had been fired by the boss. So I hurried over to the opposition paper and asked for the editor. He wasn't busy. I went in and laid my cards on the table.
>
> "I've got to make good on this thing," I told him. "I've said I can write; now I've got to show I can write. What's a feature-story?"
>
> He told me. I went home and wrote seventeen masterpieces between dusk and four o'clock in the morning. None of them ever appeared in print. The punctuation was all in the last paragraph. There were no capitals, except for proper names. I took them in—and, with them, a confession.
>
> "I was just lying, yesterday," I said. "But anyway, I've tried."
>
> And—wonder of wonders!—I got the job.

A STORY called "Twenty-four Hours" appeared in the October, 1921, issue of EVERYBODY'S, and the magazine had not been out a day before laudatory messages, both written and oral, began to come in. The name of the author, Beldon Duff, was new. Who is he? readers asked.

> What has the author who wrote this new style of mystery story done before? What about the person who wrote this, the most thrilling mystery I have ever read? Who did this, which is my idea of what a mystery story ought to be? Who is this winner you have picked?

These are just a few of the questions asked by readers. Newspapers also made inquiries. So we set about trying to uncover the real identity of Beldon Duff. But we have not succeeded. We know no more about the real identity of Beldon Duff than you do. We do not even know whether the author is man or woman. However, we have a promise that we shall have a message from the real Beldon Duff to go with the opening of the new serial, "The Soul-Scar," in August. Whether it will have signed to it Beldon Duff's real name we can't promise. But we shall keep trying until we unravel the mystery.

SEWELL HAGGARD.



Prose *and* Worse, *by* Gridley Adams

(Cincinnati Times-Star)

The jury is composed of nine men and three women, all mothers. Opening arguments will be made and the first testimony offered this afternoon. (E. D. G.)

***That's* what comes from this woman-suffrage business.**

(New York Times)

The bride, wearing a white-brocade dress and long train borne by Prince Peter and Princess Eugénie, son and daughter of Princess George of Greece, a simple white veil and a wreath of orange-blossoms, was led up the aisle by the bridegroom, wearing an afternoon coat and a white flower in his buttonhole. (M. S. C.)

How warm the summer days are getting!

(Wayland, N. Y., Register)

Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Pfuntner wish to extend their heartfelt appreciation to their friends and neighbors who assisted them to purchase another cow, for which the family truly feels grateful. (J. W. S.)

The milk of human kindness.

(Anderson, S. C., Mail)

Lost—My family. They moved off while I was out playing baseball. I am at Anderson Cotton Mill. Family please notify me. George Dutton.

Out at "home plate."

(Lake Geneva News)

The friends and neighbors of Mrs. Ed. Price, sr., walked in on her last Saturday night.

She hadn't the face to be seen at church the next morning.

(Livermore Falls, Me., Advertiser)

David Berryman came up from Winthrop Sunday and drove his team back. He also took his pet cat, comfortably enconsed in bags and well protected from the cold. They like their present situation very much. (H. F. L.)

Curled up back of the stove?

(Detroit Free Press)

Light housekeeping in a new modern private home for young couple; light, gas, heat, phone, $7 per week. Cheaper than this to desirable party. (C. R.)

Dearie, you stay outside while I look it over.

(Bynsville, Ia., Commercial)

George Hamilton of Dubuque spent
5c.
Sunday with home folks.

An Iowa Croesus.

(Old Saybrook items in Middletown Press)

The owners of apple trees, some of which have not been looked after for years, are undergoing pruning all through this section. (P. D.)

Gold-brick artists round again.

(Windsor, N. S., Hants Journal)

Miss Jessie Sherman went to Shelbourne last week to visit her son, Mrs. Grant Sherman, and will remain several weeks. (T. H. F.)

Boy, read that over again.

(On program of Women's Club, Bakersfield, Cal.)

"My Liver's Like a Red, Red Rose."

Well, you can't count on nothing in that state nowadays.

(Hartford Courant)

Warrants calling for the arrest of seven men in Hartford and five in New Britain were issued today by federal authorities who have been investigatinnnnnnnneta tet stst etete

Gee! I'd hate to be caught doing that.

(Pueblo, Col., State Journal)

A physician advises parents never to spank a child on an empty stomach.

Certainly not; since nature has provided plenty of parking space.

Copyright, 1922, by Gridley Adams.

(Paris, Tex., News)

J. C. Hand, of Naples, a brother of Mrs. A. M. McCormick, of Paris, whom he visited a short time ago, had the misfortune recently to lose two fingers in a gin accident. (M. N.)

Misfortune? I know a lot who'd willingly lose both hands.

(Houghton, Mich., Mining Gazette)

One of the features of the meeting Monday evening was the presence of Dr. A. S. Warthin, of the University of Michigan. Dr. Warthin is an internally famous pathologist. (M. S. C.)

Meaning he has inside dope on the subject.

(Concord, N. H., Patriot)

False teeth found in my cucumber patch. Lost a number of cucumbers. C. R. PARSONS, 14 Washington St.

A fair exchange, etc.

(Chicago Tribune)

WANTED—Candy Man. (MRS. G. A. P.)

***That's* the way to get a "Sweetie."**

(Raton, N. M., Range)

CORRECTION

The ladies of the Presbyterian Church who served the dinner at the special meeting of the Kiwanis Club last Friday night call attention of the *Range* to the fact that turkey was served on that occasion instead of baked chicken. (L. C. R.)

Gosh! It being Friday, we thought they were giving us a leg of sparerib.

(From "Friend of the People," Minneapolis Tribune)

Was Enrico Caruso any relation to Robinson Caruso? B. A. C.

Oh, you mean Robinson Crusoe, don't you? Mercy, no! Robinson Crusoe is the sailor hero of Defoe's tale, "Robinson Crusoe," one of the mostly widely read of all modern books, published in 1719. If you have not read it, and care to do so, you have many delightful hours ahead of you. It may be procured at the library.

Westward the course of learning takes its way.

(All these happened in Rockford, Ill.)

"Special dining-room for ladies, steaks and chops."

On hotel menu: "Barely soup." (Ain't it the truth?)

"FOR SALE—Five-room house, all modern. Good chicken-house." (MRS. G. A. P.)

But, without a "chicken," why buy a house?

(Rockford Republic)

Beautiful Night-Singing Canary. Phone Main 505-Ring 2.

I'd wring its neck.

(Philadelphia Record)

The wife is a piece of Burke. She lives in Northumberland and apart from her husband. (D. P. V.)

Another Eve.

(Letter received by a knitting-mill)

KIND SUR: I roat you a few days ago consuming sum stockens. Now I dont want silk I just want Cotten and the size is 26 Long and 21 around the top and foot size 10
I want 10 or 12 pairs and Just cotten and I hav truble with my feat I cant tel Just What rong the Joyints on top of my feat have enlarge and thee hurt so bad between them toes and that Joyints
Please send me the prises of you cotten stockens and of that size. And adress ——

(L. C. L.)

HOW DO THEY GET AWAY WITH THIS AT $1.00 A WORD?

Sat. Eve. Post: " 'What do I say?' he foamed. 'I want to ship some peaches.' I gulped. His eyes plunged into hers." *(Foamograph records for June just out.)*

Cosmopolitan: "She raised her eyes, let them rest, hardly seeing, on a window, then knit her brows and looked more closely."

Woman's H. Comp.: "Marion rose from a deep velvet sofa and swam to meet him." *(Oh, splash!)*

McClure's: "He took her hands and kissed them, and then, looking up into her eyes, he bent his head and gently kissed her mouth." *(Well, some girls can just make you think you're standing on your head.)*

Sat. Eve. Post: "She dragged herself to the hallway, shutting shudderingly behind her the great door."

McClure's: " 'I wasn't exactly a Willy Boy myself when I was a youngster,' he husked." *(Well, try that on your husker.)*

Cosmopolitan: "He was breathing hard; his pulses were beating in his ears; he tore his eyes from her face, and they fell upon her arm flung across him." *(P-tu!)*

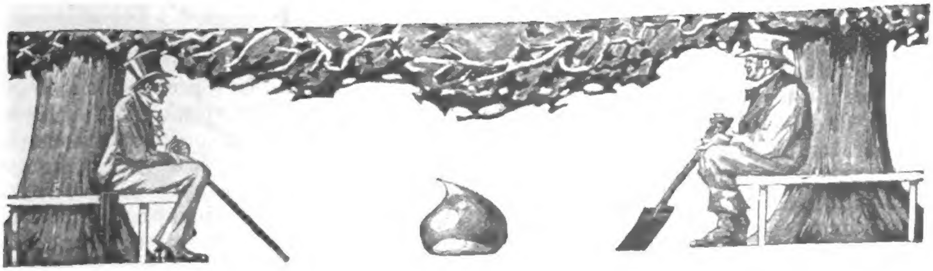
From a popular magazine: "Their eyes met for a long breathless moment and swam together. She was surprised, but no more than he, at his impulsive challenge. The force of it lifted her like a great wave and swept her from her feet.

" 'How absurd!' she protested. 'You can't bully me into marrying you. Why, I hardly know you.'

" 'Lots of time to learn. We'll be married to-night.'

"She felt the wash of the breakers against her will. 'We'll not!' " *(And that's that!)*

Sat. Eve. Post: "His eyes were absent." *(Probably over in the glass of water with his teeth.)*



Everybody's Chestnut Tree

Editor's Note: Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped addressed envelope.

COHEN, walking over the Williamsburg Bridge to Manhattan, met his friend Isaacs, bound in the opposite direction.

"Ah, ha!" he said. "I know what you're going to Brooklyn for."

"You don't," returned Isaacs.

"Bet you ten dollars I do."

The wager was accepted, and Cohen went on:

"You're going over there and look around till you find a cheap-looking building for rent that has a store. You'll take the place, stock it with goods, insure the whole thing, and then, some day, there'll be a fire."

Isaacs looked at his friend a moment and then said,

"You win."

"Well, I was right, wasn't I?" asked Cohen, as he pocketed the money.

"No," replied Isaacs; "you wasn't right. But the idea is worth it."

DR. FRIEDLANDER WEST, the prohibition leader, said at a banquet:

"Prohibition has turned a lot of temperate men into hard drinkers. It has turned a lot of law-abiding citizens into rebels. Why, a jag, which used to be such a disgrace, is now— But listen to this story:

" 'There goes Arthur Arbuthnot,' a lady said to her husband. 'Why didn't he speak to us?'

" 'Well—er—you see, my dear, Arthur s—er—full.'

" 'Yes; I know he's full, of course,' said he lady, 'but I never thought he'd be so onceited about it that he'd cut his old riends.' "

SIR ARTHUR BALFOUR, at a dinner in Washington, praised the American colored people.

"I often judge Americans by this criterion," he said: "If they like colored people, then I know they are likable themselves—and vice versa.

"Once I visited Washington a good many years ago. All the hotel waiters were colored then, and I confess I preferred the quaint colored service to the present sophisticated and elaborate service of the whites.

"The day of my arrival, when my waiter, an old colored man with snowy wool, brought me the menu, I put a coin in his hand and said, 'Just bring me a good dinner, uncle.'

"He brought me an exquisite dinner, and during my fortnight's stay we followed out this program daily. By pushing aside the menu and handing him the coin, he selected a much better dinner for me than I could have chosen myself.

"The day of my departure, as I took leave of him, he said,

" 'Good-by, sir, and good luck, and when you or any of your friends what can't read the bill of fare comes to Washington, just ask for old Calhoun Clay.' "

HE: Autos are a heavy expense, aren't they?

Me: Well, that depends. I've cut my running-expenses in two.

He: How?

Me: By leaving it in the garage half of the time.

AT A lecture, a well-known authority on economics mentioned the fact that in some parts of the United States the number of men was considerably more than that of women, and added humorously,

"I can, therefore, recommend the ladies to emigrate to that part of the country."

A young lady seated in one of the center rows of the auditorium got up and, full of indignation, left the room rather noisily. Whereupon, the lecturer remarked,

"I did not mean that it should be done in such a hurry."

"**WHEN** I see all these smiling faces before me," began the Great Man who was revisiting the school where he had learned his "a-b-c's," "it takes me back to the days of my childhood. Why is it, my dear children, that you are all so happy?"

The speaker paused for rhetorical effect. Instantly a grimy hand shot into the air.

"Well, my boy, what is it?"

"The reason we're so happy," piped the boy, "is 'cause as long as you keep on talkin', we don't have to study our 'rithmetic."

"**I** PRESUME," remarked one Pennsylvanian to another, "that to educate your daughter in music you spent a great deal of money."

"Yes; but she has brought it all back to me."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; I'd been trying to buy out my next-door neighbor at a low price for years, and could never bring him to terms until she came home."

"**THERE** lives in my town," said a Southern man, "a country preacher who became aware that he had offended many of his parishioners by advocating the closing of a certain right of way the public had been accustomed to use; but the preacher never knew how seriously he offended them until he had a talk with a person who had 'got religion' at a revival meeting held some time before.

" 'You want to know exactly what the folks up my way are saying of you?' asked the parishioner.

" 'Yes.'

" 'I am sorry that I can't oblige you,' was the response. 'It's a pity you didn't ask me before I got converted.' "

WHEN that brilliant genius, Tom Reed, was in Congress and speaker of the House, he ruled that body like a despotic monarch. On one occasion, when a very important bill was soon to come up, a number of the Republican congressmen were out of the city. Reed sent telegrams right and left, summoning them to return with all possible haste. One congressman, who was at his home, sent this telegram:

"Can't possibly come. Wash-out on the line."

Reed flashed back at him:

"Never mind that. Buy a new shirt and come right along."

IN A certain town in Virginia lives a man who is noted for his reckless automobile driving. One day he was called to the telephone and a woman's voice asked whether he intended to drive out that afternoon.

"I do not think so," replied the man. "Why do you ask?"

"Well," resumed the voice, "I just wanted to know if it would be safe for my little girl to go up-town to-day."

MOSE, a negro employed around the freight-yard, had been hit by a shifting-engine and his parts so widely dispersed that they had put him down as a total loss. Almost before the engine slowed down the claim-agent was on his job, and had the widow in tow, leading her toward the office.

With Saluda was Chloe, a back-fence friend. When the trio reached the railroad office, the agent produced some papers and began filling them in.

"Now then, Saluda," he said, "all you have to do is to sign right here, agreeing to bring no action against the company, and I will make you a present of these five nice, new one-hundred-dollar bills."

Saluda's eyes bulged out like a crab's. Chloe turned to her and gasped,

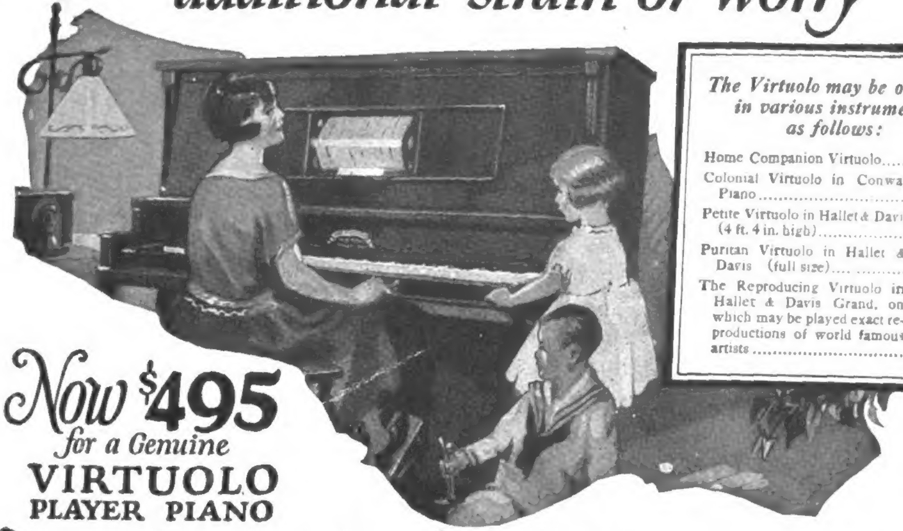
"Lan' sakes alive, chile, what yo'-all gonna do wif all dat money?"

"Oh, Ah'll buy chickens an' watermillions an' a new house an' 'bout a hundred dresses an' jes' whatevah Ah needs fo' de rest er mah life."

"Don't yo'-all need another husband?" asked Chloe.

"Well, Ah don't know 'bout dat, but ef Ah evah does get married agin, it'll sholy be to a railroad man."

Obtain this World Famed Player Piano *without additional strain or worry*



The Virtuolo may be obtained in various instruments, as follows:

Home Companion Virtuolo	$495
Colonial Virtuolo in Conway Piano	595
Petite Virtuolo in Hallet & Davis (4 ft. 4 in. high)	685
Puritan Virtuolo in Hallet & Davis (full size)	750
The Reproducing Virtuolo in Hallet & Davis Grand, on which may be played exact reproductions of world famous artists	2250

Now **$495**
for a Genuine
VIRTUOLO
PLAYER PIANO

Remarkable new plan fostered by noted educators and authorities

WOULD you like to own a wonderful player-piano—a genuine Virtuolo, supreme in musical centers throughout the world?

You can, regardless of how moderate your circumstances, or how carefully you must watch expenses.

An amazing new plan of pricing and financing which has just been perfected. A plan backed by a world-noted musical institution, and fostered by eminent authorities and educators in a nation-wide movement to place real music in every American home.

The coupon below brings confidential information by return mail. It marks a new era. An era which puts the family of moderate means on the footing formerly restricted to the financially prominent.

The Object Is This:

The plan is educational in purpose.

Its object is to give *all* children—rich and poor alike—the benefit of association with the refining influence of correctly rendered music. The invaluable association which means so much in later social and business life.

Also to provide home entertainment for the older children. For the growing boys and girls whom the dangerous influences of the outside world are constantly calling away from the refining influences of the home.

An Absolutely NEW Idea

The plan is new. It is propounded from a new idea. It embodies a unique plan of manufacturing and financing. And places the heretofore "unattainable" player-piano within the reach of every home.

It throws a new light entirely on the matter of obtaining musical environment. It has been carefully evolved by experts. It meets the *individual requirements* of every family of *every* status and condition. It is made possible only by the world spread manufacturing capacity, and powerful financial position of the Hallet & Davis Company.

All parents are urged to get the facts, without delay. They are confidential. They will amaze you. To obtain them quickly, detach and mail the coupon below.

THE VIRTUOLO
PLAYER PIANO
Made by
HALLET & DAVIS
Established 1839

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION COUPON

HALLET & DAVIS PIANO CO.,
146 Boylston St., Boston, Mass.

Send me confidential prices and terms of Virtuolo.

Name..

Address..

City...................... *State*......................

When you're tired... worried... bored...

Pick up a copy of ADVENTURE. You will soon forget yourself in its fascinating tales of places you've always wanted to visit, things you've always wanted to do—by authors who really know.

The Sea

NORMAN SPRINGER, author of "The Blood-Ship," writes of the superstitions, the intense hatred and the equally intense loyalty among seamen—cooped together on board ship sometimes for months at a stretch.

The Jungle

SANTIE SABALALA, a pure-blooded Zulu, has boldly bared the soul of the savage in his story-articles for ADVENTURE. He tells of the savage's ideals, emotions, his seeming callousness to pain—a real revelation.

The West

HUGH PENDEXTER writes stories of the early days of this country, west and east, whose fiction interest is equaled by their historical value.

The Orient

TALBOT MUNDY, after nearly a year in Arabia and the Holy Land, tells the experiences of an American—officer in the British army—in Jerusalem. His job is to prevent outbreaks among the Jews, the Turks, the Arabs—matching his wits against the skilful cunning of the Orient.

This is just a sample of the sort of fiction that brings you relaxation in

Adventure

THRICE A MONTH—25 CENTS A COPY

T. S. STRIBLING, *author of "Birthright," a novel that every one is talking about, turns his pen with equal force to other subjects in* ADVENTURE.